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ABSTRACT

An evaluation of adult basic education (ABE) programs was conducted in North Carolina, using a case study approach. Research was done by six teams that collected information from taped interviews with participants in six programs chosen to represent rural and urban areas and various demographic and racial mixes of students. Materials and records provided by the programs were also studied. The result is an extensive narrative report of the students' feelings and opinions as well as feedback from instructors. In addition, conclusions were drawn and recommendations made. Some of the conclusions were that ABE in North Carolina is meeting the needs of a percentage of those adults in the state who appear to be appropriate for the services. However, the study suggests that some policy and programmatic changes are necessary. The study found that students appreciate the program's existence and the instructors' concern; instructors like their jobs and their administrators. Administrators are committed to ABE and like the state personnel's responsiveness. However, instructors in local programs are unaware of how their efforts compare with those of other instructors; administrators often are not aware of how their programs compare with others; and the state staff questions the usefulness of lessons to be learned from other states. There is a theme of isolation in the name of autonomy. Therefore, recommendations have been made in regard to both training and policy. New funds are necessary to make these changes. Three pages of references and copies of the design proposal, the interview and observation guide, and the participants' interview guide and data sheets are appended. (KC)

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North Carolina
Adult Basic Education
Instructional Program Evaluation

1985

By

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CHAPTER 1: CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

Adult literacy and basic education are top priority topics in the United States today. Many link this interest to the continuing development of post-industrial society with its emphasis on knowledge, service, and high technology employment. Others see it as the heritage of a democratic system in which an informed populace -- with access to print sources of information -- is the bedrock for active citizen participation. Highly publicized research from the 1970s concludes that at least 23 million persons are unable to read and write well enough to perform daily tasks such as addressing envelopes correctly or reading want ads in local newspapers. This, together with national and state literacy campaigns, has raised the public awareness of the extent of adult illiteracy in the United States and has elevated it to the status of a national social problem.

Adult literacy education, broadly interpreted to include writing and computation as well as reading, is institutionalized in American federal policy as the Adult Basic Education (ABE) program, originally funded through the Office of Economic Opportunity in 1964 and transferred to the Office of Education in 1966. ABE was designed for those adults 16 years of age and older who had completed less than 12 years of school and currently were not enrolled in public schools. Federal funding is allocated to individual states which, in turn appropriate to local programs. Every state uses a preexisting educational system -- the public schools, the community colleges. or some combination -- for the majority f its program sites. In addition, some ABE funds are awarded to programs in other settings, such as community organizations, libraries. or volunteer efforts. States submit three-year state plans for Adult Basic Education to the Department of Education, but the legislation is seen as enabling rather than prescriptive. providing for a wide variation in the plans of individual states.

The wording of the Adult Education Act of 1966 reflects an expectation that literacy will directly affect the ability of adults to secure employment and thereby become more productive citizens. Darkenwald and Valentine (1984) comment that the Adult Education Act's "official goals are narrowly utilitarian. The bottom line is employment and adult education is seen not as a right or end in itself, but as a means for training adults to get and keep jobs" (p 92). In practice however, the mandate of the Adult Education Act has been interpreted very broadly by the states as well as the federal government (Darkenwald and Valentine, 1984), deemphasizing employment gains as evaluation criteria to some extent. The ABE program has been an important force in American adult literacy education, providing greatly increased access to instruction for students and training for instructors.

Federal funds are allocated to the states based upon a formula that includes population and census data; according to the 1980 census, there are 835,620 adults who are 25 years old or older and who have completed between none and eight years of public schooling in North Carolina (U.S. Department of Commerce). This figure does not include those younger than 25 or those who are continuing to drop out of school without reading and writing abilities. North Carolina is among the ten states receiving the largest federal ABE allotments, as of 1983 data (U.S. Dept. of Education, 1983).

North Carolina is proud to claim to be the first state to submit a state plan under the original legislation in 1964, and, since its approval, N.C. has maintained an active ABE program administered through the Department of Community Colleges. Local ABE programs are operating in each of the 58 community colleges and technical institutes, each of which serves one or more counties. Each institution has a designated ABE director who is responsible for the management of the local ABE program. Programs operate within the broad guidelines of the federal and state government, but, again, this tends to be enabling rather than prescriptive regulation and programs are designed by the local institution in an effort to best meet the needs of the local population.

North Carolina's ABE programs have suffered from the same chronic shortage of funds that has plagued the field nationally since the program's inception. Recently, however, North Carolina's state legislature approved state funds for ABE programs in addition to the matching percentage required for federal money. This is called FTE funding and is based upon the number of adults (or "full time equivalent" students) each program serves. Thus, there now exists a potentially powerful incentive and resource for ABE program development and expansion in North Carolina.

With the possibility of additional funds comes the responsibility to spend them wisely; it is in this climate of interest in and support for adult basic education that this evaluation study was commissioned by the Department of Community Colleges. The only previous evaluation of ABE in North Carolina was conducted in 1971, almost 15 years ago. Therefore, there is a need for more up-to-date information about ABE in North Carolina to assist local and state personnel with their anticipated planning and program development efforts. In addition, there have been new insights in the past decade into providing basic education for adults which were not reflected in the framework of the previous evaluation.

The major purpose of this study is to provide information that will assist ABE directors and state personnel to improve the effectiveness of the ABE instructional program. Thus, the study focuses on perspectives and interaction relevant specifically to instruction, rather than on other areas such as program administration or program integration into the local institutional context. Those issues are brought into the analysis only as they directly relate to the provision of effective instruction. The study also only encompasses the program designed to serve adults whose reading and math skills are classified as lower than ninth grade level, including English as a Second Language (ESL).

The rest of this chapter addresses two major areas: the ABE program in North Carolina and the research literature relevant to this study; the next chapter describes the present study's design and methodology. Chapters that follow present findings organized thematically, followed by conclusions and recommendations.

ABE IN NORTH CAROLINA

The adult basic education program has been serving adults in North Carolina for almost twenty years now, reaching out to adults in remote rural areas as well as those living in urban concentrations through the extensive and highly visible community college system. Each community college is responsible for one or more counties and provides a range of programs, including some combination of ABE, high school equivalency (GED), adult high school (AHS), human resources development (HRD), continuing education, technical career training, and college transfer programs. Participation in one of the curriculum programs leads to an Associate's degree. The system is subsidized by state and local funds, minimizing cost as a factor for adults who desire additional schooling. The state funds the GED program so that all ABE federal funds are allocated to programs serving adults whose academic skills fall below the ninth grade level.

Students

Students participating in the ABE program are drawn from each program's local area. Student demographic characteristics are displayed in Tables 1 - 5, below.

Table 1: ABE Students by Sex 1983-84

n = 49,600

Sex	Male	Female
Number	24,410	25,190
Percentage	49.2	50.8

(Source: N.C. Department of Community Colleges MIS)

Table 2: ABE Students by Racial Background, 1983-84

n = 49,600

Racial Background	Caucasian	Black	Hispanic, Asian Descent, Others
Number	22,829	22,595	4,176
Percentage	46.0	45.6	8.4

(Source: N.C. Department of Community Colleges MIS)

Table 3: Percentage ABE Students by Age, 1983-84

n = 49,600

Age (Years)	under 24	25 - 44	45 - 59	60+
Percentage	37.3	37.4	9.8	15.5

(Source: N.C. Department of Community Colleges MIS)

Table 4: ABE Students Enrolled in Level I and Level II, 1983-84

n = 49,600

Level	I (0-4)	II (5-8)
Number	21,120	28,480
Percentage of ABE students	42.6	57.4

(Source: N.C. Department of Community Colleges MIS)

Table 5: ABE Students by Employment Status at Enrollment, 1983-84

n = 49,600

Employment Status	Not working at time of enrollment	Parttime employed	Fulltime employed
Number	30,012	4,394	15,194
Percentage	60.5	8.9	30.6

(Source: N.C. Department of Community Colleges MIS)

Adult basic education is divided into levels. Level I serves adults whose skills are less that fifth grade level; level II serves those with skills from the fifth to the eighth grade levels. Although the ABE program is working with larger numbers of students at higher than at lower levels, there still is quite a substantial number of students at Level I, traditionally thought to be the most difficult level for maintaining enrollment.

The employment data compiled by the state presents some difficulties for interpretation. It is difficult to interpret the meaning of the high percentage of persons reporting "No employment." The high numbers of young adults and the relatively high numbers of those past retirement age being served by the program indicate that caution should be used when interpreting the employment report.

Instructors

ABE instructors also are drawn from each program's local area. Their characteristics are displayed in Tables 6 - 11, below.

Table 6: ABE Instructors by Age, 1983

n = 651

Age (Years)	20-25	26-35	36-45	46+
Number	34	245	167	205
Percentage	5.2	37.6	25.7	31.5

(Source: N.C. Department of Community Colleges MIS)

Table 7: ABE Instructors by Sex, 1983

n = 658

Sex	Male	Female
Number	133	525
Percentage	20.2	79.8

(Source: N.C. Department of Community Colleges MIS)

Table 8: ABE Instructors by Race, 1983

n = 658

Racial Background	Caucasian	Black	Other
Number	396	242	20
Percentage	60.2	36.8	3.0

(Source: N.C. Department of Community Colleges MIS)

Table 9: ABE Instructors by Educational Background, 1983

n = 658

Educational Level	Less than H.S.	H. S.	Some post-secondary	Bachelor's Degree	Post Bach. Studies
Number	1	34	99	389	135
Percentage	.2	5.2	15.0	59.1	20.5

(Source: N.C. Department of Community Colleges MIS)

Table 10: ABE Instructors by Years Experience in ABE, 1983

n = 658

Experience (Years)	1 or less	2 - 3	4 - 5	6+
Number	148	108	80	322
Percentage	22.5	16.4	12.2	48.9

(Source: N.C. Department of Community Colleges MIS)

Table 11: ABE Instructors by Employment Status, 1983

n = 658

Status	Fulltime	Parttime
Number	35	623
Percentage	5.3	94.7

(Source: N.C. Department of Community Colleges MIS)

These data show that ABE instructors are overwhelmingly employed on a parttime basis and tend to be white females with at least a bachelor's degree or some schooling beyond high school -- a common portrait of ABE instructors in the United States. It is interesting to note that almost half of the instructors in the system in 1983 had been working in ABE for more than five years. Although sizable percentages also were new or working in ABE only for a few years, these data point to the existing group of ABE instructors as a valuable resource for instructor training and education.

ABE Directors

Information about the ABE directors in N.C. is displayed in Table 12, below.

Table 12: ABE Directors by Racial Background and Sex, 1985

n = 58

Racial Background	Caucasian	Black	Totals
Male	14	11	25
Female	28	5	33
Totals	42	16	58
Percent	72.4	27.6	100

(Source: N.C. Department of Community Colleges)

ABE directors, therefore, tend to be white females, similar to their instructors. Only three are able to devote themselves to ABE fulltime; the rest carry multiple programmatic responsibilities.

Implications

North Carolina operates an extensive community college system, each of which operates an adult basic education program (in addition to three not-for-profit agencies). They have invested state as well as federal funds and employ a large cadre of predominantly parttime instructors to work with students at numerous class sites. Many of the instructors appear to have made a commitment to working in ABE, and have been with the program more than five years. Despite the dedication and hard work that ABE personnel have invested over the past 20 years, according to these figures and the census data they served only 4% of the potential appropriate adult population 25 years old or older in 1983 - 84.

This figure must be interpreted in context. According to Hunter and Harman (1979), North Carolina's ABE statistics are on the high end of the range of the percentage of the appropriate population served nationally by the states' ABE programs. North Carolina appears to be doing as good a job with ABE as is any other state. That is small comfort, however, when the state has made a commitment to substantially altering its illiteracy and schooling statistics. Clearly, the ABE program needs to move ahead, together with other programs serving adults who want to improve their reading and writing skills. We hope that the rest of this report provides useful insights into ways that North Carolina can improve ABE, serve larger numbers of persons, and play a significant, constructive role in the future of North Carolina.

PREVIOUS RESEARCH[1]

Standards and the Literature Base

The literature in adult basic education is voluminous, but primarily consists of "how to" manuals rather than rigorous research. It is beyond the scope of this study to describe the entirety of that literature base. Early research was unable to identify any specific materials, or instructional systems, that were successful apart from the relationship developed between teacher and student (Greenleigh Associates, 1966). There is no standard in the literature of a "good" ABE instructional program; indeed, there are conflicts among ABE providers as to whether there should be such standards, since programs are supposed to reflect local sociocultural characteristics and resources. Research into the impacts of ABE programs tends to be riddled with methodological problems and inconclusive findings (Darkenwald and Valentine, 1984); the same can be said about much of the research into the relationship between specific instructional practices and such impacts.

This is due to a number of factors. First and foremost, we do not have a deep or sophisticated understanding of the nature of the reading or learning to read processes. In addition, most of our knowledge has been generated on the basis of research with children or with proficient adult readers, rather than with adult beginning readers. Furthermore, adults who are learning how to read do not form a homogeneous group, regardless of the stereotypes that abound, and their characteristics are not well understood. Instructors as well as instructional contexts also vary widely, and the relationship between these and other factors has been investigated only superficially. Equally important is the fact that most of the research conducted in the 1960s and early 1970s was interpreted through a perspective in which the thoughts and feelings of the students were largely discounted, resulting in a body of literature that is based upon the interpretation of researchers more than upon the experience of those actually involved in programs.

Despite these shortcomings, there are some lessons to be learned from the literature. These can provide a framework for analysis and suggestion rather than for prescription. They provide direction for areas of investigation rather than criteria for identifying programs as "good" or "bad." The research base has broadened considerably in the past few years, and it shows evidence of a new vitality. Researchers appear to be asking more informed questions, quantitative methodology is improved over earlier studies, increasing numbers of qualitative studies are being conducted which provide opportunities for presentation of the perspectives of those involved in programs, and the previous decade's "conventional wisdom" is being examined and tested. Recent research relevant to this present study of the ABE instructional program is described briefly in this section.

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1. Parts of this section appear in expanded form in Fingeret (1985).

Adults Learning to Read

There is limited research specifically concerning adult learning to read behaviors. Some of the research that exists, however, raises serious questions about the conventional wisdom that there is no difference in the learning process for adults and children who are learning to read. For example, Malicky and Norman (1982) studied oral reading miscues of 16 ABE students over a 30-week period. They divided their students into two groups, those who did and did not show reading improvement according to the Wide Range Achievement Test. They find that "there was little difference between the groups in use of semantic cues" (p. 734), or the ability to substitute words that had the same meaning. This is not consistent with the findings of similar research conducted with school-aged children. Malicky and Norman conclude that, "These results support the argument that differences between children and adults are sufficiently great to indicate that the pedagogy of teaching reading to children is not appropriate for the teaching of adults" (p. 735).

Reading is conceptualized in the current literature in one of three ways: top down, bottom up, or a combination of these two, known as interactive. In the bottom up model comprehension of the overall message of the text is slowly built up by accumulating the smaller pieces, sound by sound and word by word. This approach assumes that comprehension is built upon successful decoding of individual words and sounds; it is known as a subskill approach and it supports the instruction of skills in isolation and the learning of rules. The top down approach assumes that persons approach the reading process with certain cognitive structures already in place; comprehension results from using what is already known to interpret text. In this model, successful decoding of new words depends upon understanding the context in which those words must make sense to the reader and it stresses the importance of meaningful context in which the word meanings and language structure are known and provide cues used for comprehension.

The interactive approach combines both models with an emphasis on reading as a process of constructing meaning and phonic analysis is seen as one of a number of useful tools for identifying specific words in the texts. "Sounding out" is not an end in itself, as in bottom up approaches, but is utilized as an aid to making the best fit between the reader's cognitive structures an the cues of the text. Word attack skills complement context clues.

There is no agreement on a single model of the reading process that appears to meet the needs of all adults all of the time; indeed, no such agreement exists among reading specialists working with school-aged children. However, there is some evidence that adult poor readers benefit from approaching reading with an emphasis on meaning and context, using the experience and knowledge with which they enter the classroom. Research with adults learning to read appears to show that they are most likely to approach learning to read through bottom up models (Gambrell and Heathington, 1981; Keefe and Meyer, 1980). However, when they are able to learn a new model and reading is viewed as a process of creating meaning, students are more likely to progress and to learn at a faster rate (Boraks and Schumacher, 1981; Malicky and Norman, 1982). Malicky and Norman explain:

> During instruction focusing on reading as an interactive process between print and the reader's language and world knowledge, low progress adult readers showed a shift in their reading strategies from phonics to use of grammatical cues. ...Data suggested that upon reaching the grammatical-cue stage, they would go on to achieve better comprehension. (p. 731)

Boraks and Schumacher present a detailed analysis of the learning-to-read behaviors of 14 students in a beginning reading ABE class. They find that,

> ABRs [adult beginning readers] who thought of reading as discovering meaning, were aware of when they were not gaining meaning, and had been exposed to syllabication and could manipulate vowels and syllables, tended to make progress. ABRs who thought of reading as word calling, did not make successive attempts at words, and had trouble reorganizing visual input, tended to make less progress. (p. 238)

Snoddy (1984) notes the tentative nature of these findings and offers the suggestion that,

> Some adult reading students who depend heavily upon the graphophonic cue system might profit a great deal from instructional programs which focus on the interactive and communicative nature of the reading process. Such programs should include methodologies which encourage the adult learner to apply all of his or her available language knowledge to textual materials. (p. 140)

The literature historically has contained voluminous information about teaching reading according to the subskill model, but recently has begun to include information about instructional practices that are consistent with the interactive model (e.g., Bacon, 1983; Rigg and Taylor, 1979; Schneiderman, 1978; Thistlethwaite, 1983). In addition, experienced adult basic education personnel have provided case studies in which they document their success using the interactive approach with students with whom they had been unsuccessful with traditional bottom up or subskill approaches (e.g., Milligan, 1982; Rigg and Taylor, 1979).

As described by Boraks and Richardson (1981), instructional strategies consistent with the view of reading as a process of creating meaning focus on broadening the social/cultural perspective of the learner, help the learner to participate actively in the learning process, and stress reading as a meaning-making process. The reading process must become an area of personal reflection for students; they must actively engage in changing from using bottom up to interactive approaches to reading. Snoddy (1984) suggests, "If reading behavior is somehow related to what one thinks about reading, then it may be important to incorporate instruction about reading as a process into adult literacy programs" (p. 140). The interactive approach also stresses that reading comprehension, or creating meaning, is the result of the students combining their knowledge from life experiences with the cues of the text.

Adult basic education instructors traditionally have discussed with students their reasons for entering a program and their learning goals. Assessment has focused on identifying a skill level at which to begin instruction, primarily based upon a subskill model of the reading process. Recent research raises questions about the adequacy of these procedures. For example, Boraks and Schumacher (1981), for example, find that

> ABRs [adult beginning readers] who felt that their teacher considered how they wanted to learn as well as what they waned to learn tended to stay longer. ABRs who felt that teachers did not consider how they wanted to learn tended to drop out. All ABR teachers are aware of the importance of determining what students want to learn. It now appears equally important to consider how they want to learn. (p. 239)

In addition, present assessment practices do not evaluate the learner's approach to reading or preexisting internalized model of the reading process.

Purposes of Literacy Programs

Another area that is opening to renewed scrutiny has to do with the purposes of literacy programs. Two basic models have been identified in the United States: individually and community oriented (Fingeret, 1985). Individually oriented programs tend to approach literacy as the primary focus of instruction 'and to be oriented to mainstreaming the individual into middle class society. Instruction materials may address housing, employment, or other life issues, but the content is secondary to teaching reading skills. Individually oriented programs may be located in a community center rather than a formal educational institution, but they do not necessarily become involved in the issues facing the students' community except as a matter of personal assistance or counseling for the student. ABe programs historically have been individually oriented, corresponding to the legislative emphasis on improving individuals' circumstances.

Community-oriented programs offer literacy education as one aspect of the services of community-based, organized and controlled agencies. They claim to reach the most economically poor and in need, those not currently served in large numbers by ABE. Community-oriented programs are more likely to be advocates of social change, facilitating efforts of individuals to address broad community concerns and teaching literacy skills as necessary to assist the larger process of change. Reading is secondary to developing an understanding of social forces and a belief in cooperative effort and the possibility of change.

Hunter and Harman (1979)'s influential study of the status of illiteracy and adult literacy education in the United States is not a field-based empirical study of adult basic education programs, but rather a thoughtful and challenging synthesis based on available data, reports, literature and personal interviews. They claim that although there are many more individually oriented than community-oriented programs, it is the community-oriented programs that best meet the needs of those who have the least social mobility and resources. They call for increased numbers of community based programs in order to better meet the needs of those who are not engaged in ABE and other individually oriented programs. In addition, a number of ABE personnel have begun questioning many of the assumptions underlying the traditional individually-oriented model and calling for a greater diversity in the organization and underlying assumptions of services (e.g., Lowe and Jones, 1983).

The Role of Culture

Finally, an emerging body of research is attesting to the role that culture plays in the way nonliterate adults construct their social worlds and assess involvement in adult literacy education. Authors such as Eberle and Robinson (1981), Fingeret (1983), Fitzgerald (1984) and Sisco (1983) question the assumptions with which researchers and practitioners have approached nonliterate adults in the past and they provide opportunities for the perspective of nonliterate adults to be heard. Fingeret (1983) finds that researchers, as representatives of the literate, educated, dominant culture in the United States, approach nonliterate adults from a deficit perspective in which their culture is seen as lacking, rather than as alternative, in relation to the mainstream culture in the United States. She also finds that nonliterate adults consider the costs as well as the potential benefits of program participation, weighing heavily the apparent separation from their personal communities that additional schooling may entail.

Outcomes and Impact Studies

Previous evaluation studies of adult basic education programs have tended to attempt to measure outcomes rather than to illuminate the internal processes and dynamics of programs. Darkenwald and Valentine (1984) identify four categories of outcomes studied: economic, education, personal, and family and socially related outcomes. Economic outcomes refer to links between program participation and securing a job, job mobility, increased job security, salary increases and a decrease of dependence upon public assistance. Educational outcomes refer to students' movement in the educational hierarchy (such as attaining a high school equivalency certificate or enrolling in a community college) and involvement in job training programs. Family and social life outcomes refer to involvement in activities such as assisting children with schoolwork, voting, and participation in community organizations. Personal outcomes refer to lifestyle changes such as increased use of reading for accomplishing daily tasks and attitude changes toward oneself and others.

It is important to recognize that these approaches to identifying outcomes assume that adults come to programs without jobs, that they do not provide an environment supportive of their children's schooling, that they are not active in their communities in some form, and they feel badly about themselves and others. In other words, if half of the students in a program already were employed and satisfied with their jobs, the program might appear to be doing a poor job according to an evaluation that examined new employment as an indicator of effectiveness. This limitation of the nature of the outcomes studied is one of the major problems of existing ABE evaluation research. Darkenwald and Valentine summarize: "More research is needed to identify accurately the many outcomes of participation in ABE for the individual, and to assess the impact of ABe on society as a whole" (p. 17).

Outcome studies have been quantitative, for the most part, and have involved pretest - posttest or survey designs that assume that the variables are appropriate, well defined and understood. Many suffer from methodological problems. Nonetheless, there are some relatively well-conducted outcome studies and their results are broadly consistent. They tend to find that the major outcomes of participation in ABE are increased reading and writing skills, increased self-confidence and some increase in employment. Quite important is the pattern that the majority of participants enroll in ABE for educational rather than employment reasons (e.g., Darkenwald and Valentine, 1984; Kent, 1973; Young et al., 1980). Darkenwald and Valentine summarize:

> Many studies have indicated that the most dramatic change for students was in self-concept. Going back to school helped many students improve their self-image and gain confidence in themselves and in their ability to deal with other people. Studies also found that most ABE participants made at least some gains in basic skills. These gains were particularly important because the majority of students reported that hey enrolled in ABE to achieve educational goals. A larger percentage of respondents in numerous studies reported at least partially attaining their personal educational goals. (p. 17)

It is difficult to identify evaluation studies that attempt to provide insight into the instructional program's dynamics and the perspective of participants. Researchers have tended to try to isolate outcomes rather than attempting to understand the interaction between program, student and environment. Researchers also have been limited by small budgets and short time frames which mitigate against the extensive data collection necessary to study process. Charnley and Jones (1979) conducted a qualitative study in Great Britain in which they evaluated the national literacy program according to the students' intentions. They also found that enhanced self-esteem was the most important outcome for students.

Mezirow, Darkenwald and Knox (1975) studied the internal dynamics of a sample of urban ABE programs through observation and interviews. Although not specifically an "evaluation" study, they provide insight into the relationship between program organization, administration, instruction and student participation. They find that ABE is a "creaming" operation which tends to serve those most similar to white middle-class educators to a greater extent than it serves those who are poor and members of minority groups. They also describe the "tyranny of numbers," the enrollment - funding cycle which tends to encourage administrators to work with those who are the easiest to work with -- white, mobile adults.

Implications

Clearly the implications to be drawn from these areas of research are still tentative, and additional research is needed in these as well as other areas. There are some themes here that are quite relevant to this project, however. They form the broad framework within which the instructional program in North Carolina can be evaluated.

1. There are serious questions about whether adults and children learn to read through the same process. While it is important to draw upon the literature pertaining to the instruction of children as widely as possible, this must be tempered with an attitude of inquiry. Implication: We cannot accept the unexamined application of the teaching techniques used with children.

2. There are at least three major models for adult reading instruction: bottom-up, top-down, and interactive. Although the evidence is inconclusive as to one particular model that may be "best" in specific circumstances, there clearly are alternatives that can be tried when a particular approach does not appear to assist an individual learner. Implication: The decision that an adult is unable to progress should not be made on the basis of attempting instruction through only one model.

3. Learning to read may be best described as "education" rather than as "training," in that the students' learning will be enhanced through the development of personal insight into the learning process and cultural attitudes, beliefs, and values that appear to influence that process. In addition, it appears that students are capable of developing such insight and collaborating in the instructional process, despite stereotypes which might bias us otherwise. Implication: Instructors should engage learners in examination of their relationship to learning rather than simply see themselves as teaching a set of decontextualized skills.

4. There are at least two differing program models: community and individually oriented. It appears that they appeal to different groups of adults identified as appropriate participants in adult basic education. Programs that offer only one program model take the risk of meeting the needs of only one segment of the population. Implication: Programs should provide alternative models to meet the needs of the largest number of poor, nonliterate adults traditionally served in small numbers by ABE programs.

5. Research is raising questions about much of the traditional conventional wisdom in adult basic education. Although the findings and implications for instruction are not conclusive, the

research underlines the importance of approaching adult basic education with an open, inquiring attitude and maintaining some contact with sources of information about current research efforts. In addition, additional research is urgently needed in which the implications of the studies cited here and others are tested in classrooms. This calls for partnerships between instructors and researchers to provide additional insight into the programmatic and instructional questions that loom large for the field. It also requires that instructors have some understanding of the reading process, at least as it is conceptualized to date, rather than simply following prepared materials by rote. Implication: Instructors should see themselves as testing and refining the developing knowledge base and should be able to place their own efforts into a broader perspective.

6. Although federal and state policy seems to be oriented to adult basic education serving employment goals, many adults enroll in programs to meet educational and personal goals which may indirectly, rather than directly, influence employment. Excessive linkage of ABE to employment training programs may limit ABE's larger impact on the general quality of life in N.C. (Darkenwald and Valentine, 1984). Implication: Caution must be exercised when using employment gains as a rationale for program development or as a criterion for evaluation.

7. Since much of the programmatic research has focused on impacts and outcomes, we do not have a very good understanding of the process through which adults come to participate in, remain, or leave programs. We also do not have much insight into how adults integrate program participation and learning into their daily lives. Implication: Additional research is needed to assist program personnel in understanding the relationship between programmatic factors and the lives, characteristics and decision making processes of potential adult students.

8. It appears that reading comprehension results from students using their prior experience and knowledge as well as the text to construct meaning. Implication: Reading materials that relate to students' lives and interests will facilitate comprehension because they supply "clues" that students can interpret, as well as enhancing the intrinsic interest of the materials.

The background information contained in this chapter is intended to provide a context for the report that follows. The implications of recent research should be kept in mind as the ABE instructional program is described in the body of this report. It also should be remembered that this research is quite recent and the implications remain tentative. They do not describe the current "state of the art" in ABE but, rather, provide some directions for future development. Part of the task of this evaluation study is to determine the extent to which the insights provided by recent literature already may be incorporated into ABE programs in North Carolina, and, if not, to assess the extent to which they may provide assistance for future development.

CHAPTER 2: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Evaluation designs can take many different forms and follow a multitude of models. The choice of model depends partly on the purpose of the evaluation and the audience for which it is being conducted. It also depends upon the phenomenon under scrutiny and the resources available, including the evaluator's skills and knowledge. The relationship among those factors is explored in this chapter as the methodology and design of this study are described.

THE PLANNING STUDY

This present study was initiated with a planning grant funded by the N.C. Department of Community Colleges as a 310 special project in 1982-83 that was designed to:

1. Identify stakeholders and their particular interest in ABE evaluation;
2. Determine whether there is support for conducting an evaluation;
3. Specify data appropriate for such an evaluation;
4. Consider design alternatives;
5. Conduct a small-scale feasibility study; and
6. Develop a design according to stakeholder specifications and the results of the feasibility study.

All directors of ABE programs funded by the Department of Community Colleges (58 institutions and three not-for-profit organizations) were requested to identify stakeholders among those persons associated with their programs, resulting in a group of 511 persons (see the Appendix for the letter sent to ABE directors). At the same time, a project advisory committee was created consisting of a university evaluation specialist and community college education specialists, two Department of Community College ABE program administrators, and two ABE program directors from different regions in the state. They provided guidance for the development of a survey to be mailed to the 511 identified stakeholders (see the Appendix for the survey). The Advisory Committee suggested that student recruitment and retention, which had been identified as a problem area previously by ABE directors and instructors, could be a potential focus for the evaluation.

The survey asked stakeholders if they supported the need for an evaluation study, and, if so, if they thought that recruitment and retention were appropriate foci. The project received 296 responses to the survey, or almost a 58% response rate. Respondents overwhelmingly supported the need for an evaluation with two caveats: it should require a minimum of additional effort on the part of local ABE personnel and it should focus more broadly on the effectiveness of the instructional program rather than on recruitment and retention. The respondents seemed to feel that if the instructional program was strong, recruitment and retention would be secondary issues. They were interested in understanding the range of materials and methods used in programs and the relationship between these and student satisfaction.

After considering design alternatives, an evaluation design was developed and sent to the 296 respondents, requesting their comments and soliciting participation in revising the design (see the Appendix for the initial design proposal). The project received 72 written responses, the large majority of which supported the proposed design. Additional comments were solicited by telephone and in meetings, resulting in much more widespread input than is reflected in the written response figure.

Responsive Evaluation Design

The request for insight into the effectiveness of the instructional program, however, could best be provided with the use of a multisite case study model designed as an adaptation of Stake's (1975) responsive evaluation. Stake describes: "An educational evaluation is responsive evaluation if it orients more directly to program activities than to program intents; responds to audience requirements for information; and if the different value perspectives present are referred to in reporting the success and failure of the program" (p. 14). Foremost, it responds to the concerns of program stakeholders. In this model, the design is continually evolving as the evaluators collect and analyze data and then raise new questions. Feedback to the audience can come at many stages in the process, depending upon their need for information and the evaluators' judgment.

Case Study Model

Qualitative or naturalistic research methods, such as interviews and observations, are most appropriate for responsive evaluation (Guba and Lincoln, 1981). We decided to use these methods, primarily, to develop a multisite case study, or a single case study of ABE in North Carolina that is based upon data collected from a number of discrete program sites. The case study model is described by House (1980):

> This approach concentrates on the program processes themselves and on how people view the program.... The usual methodology is to conduct interviews with many people, to make observations at the program site, and to present the findings in the form of a case study.... The aim of the approach is to improve the understanding of the reader or audience of the evaluation, primarily by showing them how others perceive the program being evaluated. (p. 39)

As House describes, the case study draws its criteria and standards largely from the perspectives of those participating in the study. The strengths of the case study lie in its ability to portray the perspectives of the multiple groups involved in the program being evaluated. Since it presents relatively holistic pictures of programs, the information can have immediate utility. The problems include the difficulty of collecting and managing the large amounts of text data that are generated by extensive interviews and observations, the extended time frame necessary to complete rigorous analysis, and issues of confidentiality and fairness in portraying the diverse points of view (House, 1980). Nonetheless, as House and others attest, the case study is enjoying increasing popularity in evaluation studies and its potential is becoming increasingly recognized.

Making Judgments: Merit and Worth

The evaluator can choose to simply portray the perspectives of relevant groups and leave the judgments to the audience. In the case of the present study, however, one of the requests of the stakeholders was a set of recommendations which had to be based upon judgments. We were faced with the question of determining the criteria for those judgments. We entered into the evaluation study with the understanding that at least part of our framework for judging the program would develop as we interacted with students, instructors and administrators responsible for the instructional program.

Guba and Lincoln assert that evaluations require assessment of "worth" and "merit" (p. 11), and, therefore, are distinguished from other case study research. They build on the work of Scriven (1978) and others by defining merit as intrinsic value and worth as the applicability in a specific context. Guba and Lincoln provide the example of an internationally respected Russian history professor whose merit is based on the criteria of the field and probably stable over a period of time while his worth depends upon a context in which such studies are valued. Most important here is the idea that if you "change the context, you change the worth" (p. 43).

Merit may be assessed by reference to the standards held by a group of experts, called "absolute merit" by Guba and Lincoln, or through comparison with other examples of the same phenomenon, labeled "relative merit." In the present study, merit assessment poses some problems. Although ABE in N.C. will be assessed partly through reference to the implications that can be drawn from the research literature, there are no standards for good ABE programs that have been agreed upon. The major criteria for absolute merit, therefore, can only be the extent to which the program incorporates recognition of the issues facing the field. Assessing comparative merit also is problematic because of the dearth of studies portraying the internal dynamics of the ABE instructional program. Mezirow, Darkenwald and Knox (1975), by far the most inclusive, also is ten years old.

Worth relates to the valuing of the stakeholders and uses their perspective as a framework for analysis. In this case, the stakeholders are interested in improving the reading and writing abilities of the program participants. The extent to which that is being achieved effectively represents an assessment of worth. This is not without its problems also, since success in the ABE program does not have a common definition among stakeholders. Clearly the perceptions of students are relevant here, as they describe the worth of the program in relation to their needs and goals. Guba and Lincoln declare that, "The distinctions between worth and merit make it plain that evaluations of worth, at least, require extensive immersion in the context of the evaluand, for the values, standards, and conditions under which worth is determined can be found only there" (p. 52).

STUDY DESIGN

Feasibility Study

The rest of this discussion of methodology and design is written to portray the emerging stages of responsive case study evaluation. The original design, generated from the responses to the survey and supported by the stakeholders, proposed to collect existing numerical data describing the ABE student population, their progress in the program, and recruitment and follow up data as it was known by individual programs. These aggregated systemwide data would provide some groundwork, but the major study would be composed of case study data drawn from six local program sites. Interviews were proposed with students, program personnel and community members associated with the programs. At each site, students would be drawn from the following three categories:

1. "Stayers," or current participants who have made identifiable progress in the program and have been active for at east two consecutive quarters;

2. "Completers," or former program participants who have left the program after meeting their goals, according to program staff; and

3. "Drop outs," or former program participants who left the program but are not identified as having met their goals.

A feasibility study to test the design and develop interview and observation guides was conducted at a technical institute during the fall, 1983. A "local informant" was identified on the basis of her experience working in the ABE program as well as for her knowledge of the local community. A team of graduate student researchers, one white female and one black female, were chosen on the basis of their interest in ABE (although neither had extensive experience in ABE programs) and their training in the requisite research skills. The local informant received training in her role identifying and soliciting the participation of students fitting into the categories listed above.

The major methodological finding of the feasibility study was that the categories of stayers, completers and drop outs were not viable, even though they had been identified from the stakeholders' responses to the survey. There did not appear to be commonly held definitions of these categories among administrators, instructors and students, so the definition of completion, success, and drop out were identified as research questions relevant to studying the instructional program. We redefined the student sample to try to include students with a history of consistent attendance and those who were not attending at the time the local informant contacted an individual instructor. We also constructed interview and observation guides for the larger study (see the Appendix for the Interview Guides).

In December, 1983 we identified six programs that would serve as the case study sites. They were chosen to represent rural as urban population areas; mountain, piedmont and coastal geographic distribution; small, medium and large previous student enrollment; broad as well as narrow community linkages; and relative administrative stability (ABE directors who had been in their positions at least one year). The ABE directors were contacted and their participation solicited. Each ABE director was asked to identify someone who would be willing to serve as a local informant member of the research team. This should be someone with some familiarity with the program as well as with the larger community context. We decided to begin with three sites.

Three teams of two university graduate students each were created. One team consisted of a white male and black female, a second of a black male and white female, and a third of two white females. All researchers received training in interview and observation methods and data collection techniques and the purposes of the research. The teams included the two researchers who had worked on the feasibility study, but none of the researchers really had any extensive experience in adult basic education. Each team was assigned to a site and responsible for integrating their local informant into the team.

Primary Data Collection

The research at each site was conducted according to the demands of the site, resulting in slightly different designs and procedures at each program. In all cases the local informants quickly became members of the team; they were enthusiastic, cooperative and excited at the potential benefits from this approach to evaluation research. Their commitment to the project was crucial, we believe, in securing the cooperation of the students, instructors, administrators and community members who spent long hours being interviewed and allowing observations.

At one site we initiated data collection with a "community meeting" involving as many instructors and administrative personnel as possible in a discussion of the design and purpose of the evaluation. Each instructor then worked with the local informant identifying potential student interviewees and setting up a schedule for the researchers to observe classes. At other sites the ABE director sent a memo to all instructional personnel describing the project and requesting cooperation so that they were knowledgeable about the project when the local informant contacted them. We continued to find that program personnel were excited about this as an opportunity for their "stories" to be told.

Local informants usually accompanied the researchers when they visited a class site for the first time; they introduced the researchers to the personnel and oriented them to the context. At one site students self-selected themselves for the project, but at the other two sites the initial students and instructors to be interviewed were identified by the local informant and the students' instructors; we then solicited their participation. Once a research team had begun working with a site they continued making contacts on their own, expanding the sample beyond those initially referred in efforts to guard against sampling bias. The researchers always interviewed students in the classes of the instructors who were interviewed, and interviewed additional students as the need and opportunity arose.

The research teams conducted their first interviews together, checking on each other's understanding of the task and supporting each other's learning. After the initial one or two interviews, however, each researcher conducted interviews individually, tape recording whenever possible and writing additional fieldnotes following each interview or observation. In the evenings they would compare their notes and, with the local informant, plan for the next interviews. When the researchers returned to the university their interview tapes were transcribed and they met with the principal investigator to discuss their progress and plan for their next trip to the site.

The entire research project staff met every two weeks to discuss overall progress and planning. The challenge of supporting the autonomy of each researcher and research team -- important for the vitality of the data collected at each site -- and yet maintaining a coherent overall project direction quickly surfaced and remained one of the major challenges facing the project throughout this stage. It is an issue mentioned often by methodologists (e.g., Guba and Lincoln, 1981). Researchers were encouraged to develop their direction in data collection relatively independently, according to their ongoing analysis and the characteristics of their particular site.

Validity and Reliability

Validity and reliability are concerns shared by all researchers. We incorporated multiple approaches to these issues, in accordance with the advice of numerous respected methodologists (e.g., Denzin, 1970; Guba and Lincoln, 1981). At all times we endeavored to protect the confidentiality of the study participants.

Our approach to insuring validity and reliability included the following: the use of multiple researchers working independently and in differing team configurations; the inclusion of local persons familiar with the local program and area as members of the on-site teams; multiple student interviews from the same classroom; observation combined with interviewing instructors whenever possible; independent researcher data analysis of individual sites compared with their team member's analysis of the site and the principal investigator's analysis across sites; and presentation of the emerging analysis at periodic intervals and inclusion of the response as we proceeded. We collected program documents and records as well as observation and interview data. We also added a research associate with experience in case study research who could check the methodology and attest to the relationship between the data and the analysis.

Emerging Themes

During the spring, 1984 each researcher was asked to analyze his or her individual data, each team was asked to analyze their site, and the principal investigator analyzed the entire set of data as one multisite case study. The entire project staff met to compare analyses and identify the themes that would be further investigated at the next two program sites. We found that the themes were quite consistent across sites and among the groups of instructors, students and administrative personnel. The themes identified by the principal investigator working with the entire set of data were consistent with those identified by individual researchers and research teams.

Four major issues emerged from this analysis:

1. Definition of success or completion of ABE. Researchers were finding that students considered by the program staff to have separated from the program did not necessarily consider themselves to be in that category unless they had moved on to the GED program. Students who had not been attending classes for a period of time often began participating again following solicitation of their involvement in the research project.

2. Lack of ABE program identity. The second issue was the difficulty in many cases of identifying ABE students, rather than GED program participants. Students and, in many cases, instructors were unable to describe the difference between ABE and GED classification and instructors often referred the researchers to GED students who they viewed as more articulate than those reading on lower levels.

3. Lack of instructor training. The third issue concerned instructor training; instructors often claimed that they had received little or no training for their positions teaching in ABE, but the implications of that were not clear. We had to identify whether their prior education and training prepared them for their positions or, indeed, if lack of training was a cause for concern.

4. Poor numerical data available. The fourth issue was the unreliability of numerical data produced by the program and the programs' inability to produce any student follow up information or, in many cases, to identify the names of former students. This forced us to reassess the role of numerical information in our final analysis and to identify record keeping as a research issue.

The major issue confronting this second stage of data collection was understanding the implications of the apparent lack of instructor training and education specific to teaching in adult basic education. It was important to interview and observe instructors identified as "good" by their directors and students, and to understand the administrators' perspective on the role of training in effective instruction. We collected instructor handbooks produced by various programs as well as record keeping forms and test instruments. We felt that there may be a connection between the definition of success, instructor training and record keeping and we tried to refocus the interview questions to illuminate these issues in particular.

Data collection at the next two sites was initiated during the summer, 1984. Additional data was collected from one of the first three sites and interviews with the state ABE personnel were solicited. A new field researcher, a white male, was added to the project. The field researchers reorganized into new teams to minimize any potential bias from an individual's or team's perspective. An experienced case study researcher joined the project as a research associate to check our methodological "trail" and to conduct data collection at the state level. In addition, the principal investigator met with state level community college ABE personnel to describe the initial analysis (while attempting to insure confidentiality for our informants) and make sure that their concerns were being addressed in the study. As a result of this meeting, an additional class site was added, representing a special population previously not included. Researchers also attended state ABE conferences and meetings during this next data collection period, collecting data from ABE personnel in addition to those directly involved in the primary sites.

Soliciting Feedback

During the fall, 1984 a preliminary analysis of the entire data set to date was conducted by the principal investigator, including the feasibility study interviews and observations, the state level data and the five major program sites. This analysis was presented to two of the field researchers and to the research associate for their analysis of the extent to which it was consistent with their experience in the field. Then it was presented to the members of the state ABE staff for their analysis of the extent to which it was consistent with their experience and the extent to which it addressed their concerns.

ABE directors were notified that the preliminary analysis would be presented in a two-part session at their state conference, a meeting they already were planning to attend. This kind of meeting is described by Guba and Lincoln (1981) as "phenomenon recognition," where the evaluators "[present] the inquirer's 'reality' to those who live it, and [ask] them whether it does, indeed, represent their common and shared experience" (p. 186). The analysis would be presented verbally at an afternoon meeting and they would have the opportunity to respond at a meeting the following day. This was done to provide opportunities for them to think about the presentation and discuss it among themselves prior to responding to the research team. Local informants who had worked on the project also were encouraged to participate. The principal investigator presented the analysis and the research associate observed the session, taking notes and tape recording for a record of questions and comments.

Only about 15 persons attended the first meeting, including some deans of continuing education and instructors as well as directors, and we realized that we would have an additional group of persons coming the following morning who had not had the opportunity to hear the presentation. Plans were amended, and the following morning the research associate discussed the preliminary analysis with the group who had heard the presentation the previous afternoon. The principal investigator and a field researcher met in a separate room with an additional 30 persons, presenting a condensed form of the analysis and involving the group in discussion in that session.

Both groups corroborated our analysis and findings to a large extent. Two preliminary constructs were challenged which helped deepen our level of analysis and provide direction for additional data collection. First, we presented an analysis that classified instructors as "isolated" or "connected," and a number of instructors pointed out that this typology did not take their perspective into account. Some whom we classified as "connected" according to external criteria actually felt isolated, and this was not reflected in our analysis. Second, we presented an analysis of students in which younger students were described as a relatively homogeneous group. A number of directors and instructors questioned this depiction, feeling that it was not representative of their experience in which younger students comprise two distinct groups.

The most interesting issue that emerged from these meetings was the directors' sense of disbelief that their input or the evaluation study itself would have a bearing on the future direction of the program. Discussion of the finding that everyone involved in the program sees themselves as reacting to external demands and regulations drew the greatest positive response to the preliminary analysis. We realized that the directors' general attitude about attending the meeting affirmed the study's findings, when we reflected about the meeting later. Had they enthusiastically attended in large numbers and proferred suggestions, we would have had to reevaluate the finding that they tend to take reactive stances. Our experience echoes Miles and Huberman's (1984) assertion that, "The occasion of data feedback is an occasion to learn more about the site, not only about your feedback" (p. 243).

Validation Site

Data from the final site was collected by the principal investigator during the winter, 1985, and was used to further refine the analysis and validate the major findings. The final rigorous analysis of the data began during this period; drafts were circulated to research team members and the research associate for additional validity and reliability checks.

MANAGING THE DATA

The data for this project were managed with the use of an Apple IIe microcomputer from the initiation of data collection. When researchers returned to the university they gave their recorded tapes to a secretary for transcription directly onto disk, using Apple Writer, a word processing program. Once the interview was transcribed it was printed out and the hard copy and tape were returned to the researcher for "editing," or correcting mistakes made by the transcriber. The researcher listened to the tape with a red pen in hand and made corrections and inserted observer's comments onto the printout. The hard copy was returned to the secretary and the corrections were made on the disk. A new printout was made and one copy went into the project files while the other went to the researcher. The tape then could be reused.

Each diskette containing data files was numbered consecutively, two identical copies of each diskette were made (labeled primary and back-up), and the disks were stored in two sets of file boxes kept in a locked filing cabinet drawer. As each disk reached its recording capacity its catalog was printed and kept in a three-ring notebook, allowing quick perusal of which files were on individual disks. In addition, as new participants were included in the data base, each researcher completed a "cover sheet" containing salient demographic and interview data to be entered onto a chart that later was converted to a microcomputer data base program.

In order to keep track of the entire process a "Tape Control Book" was created with the following headings:

a) Subject's last name
b) Researcher's name
c) Date of initial contact
d) Date tape left for transcribing
e) Date tape transcribed
f) Date printout run
g) Date printout and tape taken by researcher for editing
h) Date printout returned to secretary
i) Date editing changes made to disk
j) Date new printout run for files
k) Cover sheet submitted (yes or no)
l) Cover sheet information entered into data base (yes or no)
m) Diskette number containing this file

Thus, the status of data at different stages in this process could be determined quickly. The subject's last name was used as the diskette file name for interview data. Some interviews required multiple files because of their length and the memory limitations of the Apple. These were simply given numerical suffixes. For example, an interview with Bill Jones would be named "JONES1." If the interview required three files, they would be named "JONES1," "JONES2" and "JONES3."

When an individual file was loaded into memory, it was important to be able to identify whether this file had been edited yet, and, at times, who had been responsible for various steps of the work. Therefore, a uniform heading was developed for each file. It included the following information:

Interview with:
Date:
Interviewer:
Location:

Transcribed by:	Edited by:
Date:	Date:
Disk number:	

and, if necessary:

Continuation of file:
Disk Number:

This heading was amended for field notes or other types of data.

We found that the combination of transcription and computer use placed noticeable strain on the secretary's senses, particularly vision. Therefore, the secretary only worked with the computer doing transcription for a maximum of four hours per day. When tapes were submitted for transcription at a rate that was faster than one secretary could manage additional help was procured from temporary personnel and additional computers were accessible in the School of Education's computer laboratory/classroom. The secretary was responsible for orienting, training and supervising the temporary personnel, all of whom were skilled typists with minimal computer experience who learned the system quickly.

Each researcher was responsible for coding, categorizing and analyzing the appropriate data individually. The computer facilitated the mechanical aspects of the tasks, but did not substitute for the researcher's judgment. Each researcher received a set of disks containing the data relating to the researcher's specific site; the principal investigator had a duplicate set of all of the data. The researcher read through the data and decided upon and numbered a set of coding categories. Some researchers inserted their codes in red pen on the printout and then inserted them into the disk file while other researchers worked directly on the computer. We then used the Textual Data Categorizing program (Fingeret, 1984) which directs the computer to break apart the coded data according to code number and to file each piece of data, with an identification of its source, in a category file corresponding to the code number. At any point the "search" capability of the computer could identify the context of a quote in the original data file. The categorized data was printed out and then analyzed by the researchers.

This project generated the equivalent of three thousand pages of interview and observation data, a large coding and categorizing task by any standards. The use of the microcomputer facilitated the management of the project as well as the more tedious aspects of data categorizing, without changing the role of the researcher in the research process in any way. The computer also facilitated recoding of data; the final report is the result of three and, sometimes, four coding and analysis iterations with the same set of data. In addition, since the same piece of data can be saved to numerous category files, extensive photocopying for multiple coding was eliminated. Final report writing on the word processor was facilitated also since the data already was on disk and did not have to be typed once again.

The process we used can be adapted for use with any microcomputer with a fairly good word processing program. Computers historically have served quantitative researchers with large statistical data sets. This project provided an opportunity to explore the application of microcomputers to qualitative research in which the data consists of text. Although there certainly is additional, as yet unexplored, potential for computers in qualitative research, we believe we have made a sizable contribution to their expanded use.

THE STUDY PARTICIPANTS

This final report is based on data collected between October, 1983 and February, 1985 from 8 different ABE programs in North Carolina. We visited 25 different program sites (including on-campus classes) and, usually, multiple classes at each site. The breakdown of the roles of those for whom we have indepth interview or observation data is displayed in Table 13.

Table 13: Study Participants Identified by Role

Role	Number of participants
Students	91
Administrative personnel	25
Instructors	36
Community persons (clergy, employment counselors, etc.)	6
Local Community College Presidents	4
State level staff	6
Subtotal	168
Minus duplication (dual instructor and administrator roles)	-2
Total Participants	166 persons

It is clear from this distribution that our primary focus has been on the internal dynamics and processes of the instructional program; institution and state level administrators were interviewed to provide a broader context. Analysis of those levels is beyond the scope of this project.

Students

The largest group of participants is the students. A breakdown of their demographic characteristics is found in Tables 14 - 16. Seventeen of these students originally were identified as no longer attending the program; eight had moved from the ABE to the GED program and the other nine were identified as "drop outs."

Table 14: Student Participants by Age and Sex

n = 91

Age in years	16 - 24	25 - 44	45 - 59	60+
Male	8	14	8	5
Female	16	20	9	11
Totals	24	34	17	16 = 91
Percentages	26.4	37.4	18.7	17.5

Table 15: Student Participants by Racial Background and Sex

n = 91

Racial Background	Caucasian	Black	Hispanic	Asian Descent
Male	20	13	2	-
Female	26	23	1	6
Totals	46	36	3	6 = 91
Percentages	50.5	39.6	3.3	6.6

Table 16: Student Participants by Employment Status at the Time of First Contact

n = 91

Presently employed outside the home (full and part time)	Not presently employed outside the home and seeking employment	Not presently employed outside the home and not seeking employment (homemaker, retired, disabled, etc.)
40	28	23

We engaged in theoretical sampling (Glaser and Strauss, 1967), continuing to solicit student participation until our categories were saturated. The sample is designed to insure that the perspectives of potentially differing groups of students are adequately represented in the data.

Instructors

The characteristics of the instructors included in the report are displayed in Tables 17 - 19 below.

Table 17: Instructors by Age and Sex

n = 36

Age in years	20 - 29	30 - 39	40 - 49	50+
Male	2	1	1	-
Female	-	19	9	4
Totals	2	20	10	4 = 36
Percentages*	5.6	55.6	27.8	11.1

* Do not add to 100 due to rounding.

Table 18: Instructors by Sex and Racial Background

n = 36

Racial Background	Caucasian	Black
Male	3	1
Female	21	11
Totals	24	12 = 36

Table 19: Instructors Years of Experience in ABE

n = 36

Experience (Years)	less than 1	1 - 3	4 - 6	more than 6
	7	12	9	8 = 36

With instructors, similar to students, our concern was insuring that the potential for differing perspectives was adequately explored and that each viewpoint was saturated. It was not necessary, nor was it our intent that the sample represent the distribution of characteristics of the instructors as a whole. The low number of male instructors, however, is consistent with the low numbers found in the system.

Administrative Personnel

The salient characteristics of the administrative personnel included in this report are displayed in Table 20 and Table 21.

Table 20: Administrative Personnel by Racial Background and Sex

n = 25

Racial Background	Caucasian	Black
Male	8	2
Female	9	6
Totals	17	8 = 25

Table 21: Administrative Personnel by Years of Experience in ABE

n = 25

Experience (Years)	less than 1	1 - 3	4 - 6	6+	Unknown
	2	3	3	11	6

We interviewed all administrative personnel related to the five original sites, including the ABE directors, coordinators of learning centers and off-campus site directors. We also interviewed administrative personnel relating to one of the two additional sites (a large off-campus site with multiple classes) and two additional ABE directors. Recruiters also are included in this category because their responsibilities include organizing class sites, identifying and recommending instructors for off-campus sites and managing off-campus classes.

The data analysis and findings are organized thematically and presented in the chapters that follow. The participants' names have been changed to protect their identities, but gender references remain accurate. The purpose of social science research in general is to identify patterns that appear to exist across diverse phenomena. The patterns presented in the following chapters were found across all of the sites visited and in no way reflect any one specific ABE program unless identified as such.

CHAPTER 3: THE LOCAL PROGRAM CONTEXT

Instructors and students work together in a larger programmatic context -- the local ABE program. Local ABE directors and other administrative personnel are responsible for organizing and operating these programs, and there is a relationship between their skills, knowledge, assumptions, values and beliefs and those of the instructors. Administrative personnel encourage certain ways of providing instruction and inhibit others through their chosen procedures and policies.

In this chapter the characteristics of ABE administrative personnel are described and their approaches to program organization and development are explored. Although each individual program has unique characteristics that have developed in response to its unique situation, all programs must respond to a similar set of issues and it is that pattern of issues and responses that is examined in this chapter. This includes an examination of models of program organization, student recruitment, and the creation of linkages to other community organizations and other community college programs. This chapter is organized around the perspectives of administrators, but includes the perspectives of instructors and students when they provide useful additional insight into the issues under examination.

The term "administrative personnel" includes all persons with programmatic administrative responsibilities. This, of course, includes the ABE directors as well as learning center coordinators, county coordinators and others with direct administrative responsibilities in the ABE program. In some cases instructors also are employed as recruiters and some administrative personnel also provide instruction; the "hat" an individual is wearing in relation to a particular quote should be evident from the context.

ABE DIRECTORS

Background

Almost all ABE directors in North Carolina have many responsibilities in addition to ABE; they are full-time community college employees, but not full-time in ABE. They have bachelor's degrees and, in some cases, master's degrees. Their prior education often was in the field of elementary and secondary education and they often have prior work experience as public school teachers. Some directors were ABE instructors prior to their present positions, and most became involved in ABE as a result of their relationship to their local community colleges rather than because ABE was a professional area of expertise. As Foley explains, she "just kind of fell into it all by accident. So, some of the background that I've had did not prepare me for trying to teach reading to adults. I certainly don't have the course background to do it." Her years of experience have provided much of the skills and knowledge lacking in her formal education; she continues, "I guess after all those years you do pick up a lot of pointers."

Although it is important that some directors previously were instructors, it should be remembered that they usually had little or no training for instructional roles with adults. Therefore, their experience allows them to empathize with their instructors but to provide actual pedagogical leadership only to a limited extent. The multiplicity of their responsibilities further limits the extent to which directors can provide direct instruction or supervision for their instructors.

Administrators' Perspectives on the Purposes of ABE

ABE directors appear to support the view that the ABE program exists as the first step on the schooling hierarchy; ideally students would complete ABE, attain the GED, and continue in the community college's curriculum programs. McCroy's comment is typical: "GED testing is the final goal of the ABE program." In order to progress through the system in this manner, ABE programs must equip students with the reading, writing, and math skills necessary for success at the next level. As Price comments:

> If they're going to be competent in the technical English or the technical math courses, they've got to know the stuff in order to be successful there. We don't do them any favors by not making them competent enough to do it. So you've got to be able to keep them in the class, which is really the hardest part and also make them want to learn all these things, and to be competent.

ESL programs must provide English language proficiency that will support participation in non-ESL classrooms. Seymour explains: "Our aim is to take these students, male and female, develop their English proficiency enough that they can function in an English speaking classroom, an academic classroom; get them into the high school program and have them to achieve and earn their high school diploma and continue their education."

ABE personnel also have social, emotional and psychological agendas; Mark comments: "If he or she can't read or write, they generally have some shyness or social adjustment problem about them. They need to be able to be brought into the mainstream, and this is the most difficult thing to do." Directors hope that students who enter programs intending only to learn how to read will be so successful that they will change their goals and aspire to additional education. As Westlin explains, "Hopefully, the one that came in to learn how to read the newspaper or fill out a job application- when they reach that point will want to go another step further."

ABE programs are seen as providing educational opportunities for adults whose needs are not served by any other educational institution in North Carolina. In one case, however, we found a director who felt that the purpose of ABE did not include instruction for nonliterate adults. He explains: "We don't have the personnel or it's not set up at the moment -- never have been -- to work with non-readers. When we have an inquiry about a non-reader, we just refer them to the Literacy

Council and it's sort of a cooperative type arrangement" (Rich).

Directors also believe ABE should help students become "good citizens." In ESL, this partly means preparing students for their U.S. citizenship examinations. In the larger ABE program, good citizenship is related more directly to working and socialization into the workforce. Mark explains:

> I think this is the ultimate goal of ABE, not only to teach them how to read and write, but also to teach them how to be good citizens, or how to adjust to society.... Before they could be put into the job market, they had to have not only the reading and writing skills, but they had to be socially acceptable to the employer. They have to be able to handle all the social graces. They have to be able to handle any personal situation in terms of aggressive, and nonagressive behavior.

Brower, a counselor working with many ABE students, concurs:

> Much of what I have found the problem to be, you know, with people who don't have jobs, who are undereducated, much of it has nothing to do with whether or not they have the skill or the ability to do the job. Much of it has to do with, you know, how they control their emotions, how they relate to people, how they present themselves to prospective employers.

Mark summarizes: "ABE is a feeder for the high school completion; ABE is also a feeder for business and industries that need good employees."

Administrative Philosophy

We found two basic administrative philosophies among ABE directors. One group of directors appears to feel it is important to "get out on the firing line" and meet students, observe classes, talk to instructors consistently and generally supervise the program closely. Denton, for example, always is recruiting: "If I go downtown to lunch, I might get three [people] interested standing at the bus stop, and they will come down here, and I guess the class at night, nearly all of them, I recruited that way. Just on the street." Rakes explains what she looks for when she observes classes:

> A lot of time you can tell things by [observing] -- if [students] were upset, if they look tired, then you know something is wrong with the situation. Another thing is if I see a teacher is sitting a lot. To me ABE is getting up and interacting and being involved with the students but if I see a teacher who is sitting a lot that is a question mark, walking the line. Another thing that I look at is that there is an adequate amount of materials being used.

Rakes is a former ABE instructor and believes that, "Most students get tired of just worksheets and all of that."

Other directors define their roles more narrowly. They check attendance reports and purchase materials and depend upon the soundness of their initial employment decisions to create a successful instructional program with qualified instructors and satisfied students. Rich provides insight into this group of administrators:

> I see my role as a facilitator. The teacher is the one that has the contact with the student. I manage the budget and try to provide the materials and meet the needs of the teachers rather than come in contact with the student. I do have contact with the students but not on a day-to-day basis.

Discussion

Some ABE directors have experience as ABE instructors, but most do not have any specialized training or education in adult basic education, adult literacy education or, for that matter, administration. They often have "come up through the ranks" in the community college system and manage their programs consistently with their own experience as instructors and their understanding of the mission of the community college system. The multiplicity of their roles demands that a limited amount of time and energy can be spent on the ABE program.

The purposes of ABE programs are not placed in broad cultural, political or social perspectives, nor are they viewed in terms of community or social change. Directors appear to be oriented strictly to individualistic, mainstreaming models of adult basic education in which social mobility through schooling credential attainment is the path to program and student success. Directors also do not appear to view adult basic education as a way of assisting adults to build on their previous learning but rather in a narrow programmatic sense of providing the first step on the ladder of the educational hierarchy.

PROGRAM ORGANIZATION

Program Models

We found three different program organization models. In one model, located in a small city, student intake and placement testing are centralized to some extent in the campus learning lab. Lab personnel test students and refer them to classes that are appropriate for their levels. Students reading below the fifth grade enter ABE I classes; students reading above this level, according to the WRAT, have the option of joining a class or working with programmed materials in the learning lab. The main ABE I class is located on campus and, the director explains, "People tell you never to do ABE classes on campus and certainly not for basic readers. But here we are and it's booming" (Foley). When asked the reasons for this apparent success, she explains,

> Some of the community sites do not have a lower level reading component so we're having to mainstream or to centralize some students here, that's one. Another is that we have two fullfledged instructors in there and on any given night with

> those two instructors, we've got at least three volunteers. So, the teacher-student ratio, if you want to count volunteers and teachers in that class, is probably one to four at most. (Foley)

Another model operates like a "one-room schoolhouse" Rudd; individual instructors in rural and campus sites test students and, if they are reading above a 4.2 level, provide ABE and GED instruction. However, ABE I students are referred to the local Literacy Council "because we can't give them the kind of attention they need and still conduct a class" (Rudd). The Literacy Council has been developed with the assistance of the community college personnel who now act as "consultants" to them. When students complete the Laubach program at the Literacy Council, they are supposed to return to the ABE program for additional work. However, Balluck admits, "To be real truthful, there haven't been very many of them. Most of them finished those books in Laubach -- they're reading between third and fourth grade reading level and they stop."

It should be pointed out that the other models are far more typical; Foley, director of another program, reflects the feelings of most ABE directors when she comments: "If people cannot read on at least a fourth grade level, that should be our priority." However, although most programs do not actually refer students to the Literacy Council rather than serve them, many programs bring Literacy Council volunteers into the classroom where they work individually with students while the instructors work with those reading above a fourth grade level. Thus, while the students remain "ABE students," the ABE program essentially is referring these students to Literacy Council volunteers.

In a third model, individual instructors also are responsible for testing, but they work with all of the students who enroll from the area surrounding their rural site, from beginning ABE through GED students. The class will be "called" an ABE or GED class according to the level that predominates. McCroy, a director, explains that the ABE and GED programs "are not really separate. The same teachers teach both, and it just sort of depends on the ability level of the class as to what we call it." McCroy feels this is a "plus" since it facilitates coordination of the ABE and GED programs. The only difference between this and the second model is the even greater range of levels that may be found in one classroom.

This mixture of ABE and GED levels in classrooms or learning labs appears to predominate. In rural areas, especially, instructors do not want to turn away students who may be reading on higher or lower levels than the majority of other students in the group. Phelps explains: "The classes are always open to anyone who comes in and if you open a class to anyone who comes in, then you have to take them were they are. If you have an ABE class set up and the person come in ...with ...[grade eleven level] then if you say that there is a class across town, they might not ever go back." A second, more advanced class cannot be set up unless there are enough students on that level to justify the expense of a second instructor: "We have to get our minimum number to have classes so we've got to take what we can get up" (Calder). Therefore, as Rakes comments, "We have a mixture and we can't help but the teacher has to be able to accommodate those for a basic education as well as those with a high school level."

Program Linkages

ABE programs develop linkages with many organizations, agencies and individuals in the community who may provide student referrals or resources for the programs. References are made to linkages with other programs (such as GED), groups or organizations throughout this report; in this section two organizations which appear to be particularly important to ABE are highlighted and linkages that provide student support services are described briefly.

Employment Security Commission. Employment Security Commission (ESC) counselors appear to be particularly involved with ABE; they refer clients whose educational background and skills limit their employment potential, according to the perspective of the counselor. Gallop is an ESC counselor; she gives the WRAT to clients she thinks may be reading on an "ABE level" and refers many adults to ABE when she considers it appropriate. Gallop explains: "Every time I see somebody who doesn't have a high school diploma or has low-level [skills], I send them all. But, they don't all go." Gallop believes that the alternative to education is "luck -- you might get a job by luck," but she adds: "Adult Basic Education is important even if it didn't help them get a job." She believes that family life and the overall quality of life in a community are enriched through education.

When Gallop sends students to the local ABE program, the recruiter "writes me a note and tells me that they came and she is very appreciative of the referrals, but I don't get a lot of them back with a diploma. I don't know where they go." Nonetheless, Gallop and many other ESC counselors continue working with their local ABE programs. This is partly due to personal beliefs about the value of schooling and literacy. It also is due to beliefs about the relationship between work and schooling as well as to experience with employers. Gallop explains:

> It would be very hard to get a job if you can't read pretty well because in the first place they make them fill out their applications themselves.... Many employers will, say, give us a stack of applications, they will not let them take them out. If they take them out of the office, we have to write across the top 'This application was not filled in in our office.'

But reading and writing skills are not the criteria Gallop is most concerned about; she hopes that most people she refers to ABE will attain their high school diplomas. She explains: "We just have a whole lot of jobs where people want a high school diploma and often times they won't even talk to anybody that doesn't have a high school diploma."

Gallop perceives a change in employment requirements in the time she has been working for ESC: "There's one plant that used to hire a lot of people without literacy and they conducted literacy classes on the premises -- now is requiring the high school diploma before they will even look at their applications." Gallop summarizes:

> If the employer is willing to accept a person with eighth grade reading level, an eighth grade person can do almost any factory job or labor job -- things like that. It's just that now they are moving into some more technical-type areas and people are interested in hiring people who can be versatile and transfer and be trained to do something different.

ESL: Migrant Farmworkers. The Employment Security Commission, together with the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Association (MSFA), work closely with ESL programs on a number of campuses that are providing ESL classes for migrant workers, in the migrant camps. At first, an ESC counselor, Gupton, tried to organize Spanish classes for farmers working with Spanish-speaking migrants; this did not work well. As alternatives were tried, Gupton attests, "The community college was always very helpful in wanting to continue the program. They always seemed very eager to do what they could to get this thing going." Finally, Gupton continues,

> We tried getting the crews together all in one spot or central location, but that didn't seem to work as well as going out to individual migrant housing. So the Community College hired on a couple of extra teachers, I think the most we've had is maybe 6 or 7 teachers, and they would go out twice a week and teach for, I think three hours at a session.

Gupton helped the ABE programs understand the migrants' needs and develop a program appropriate for that context. He explains, "They geared it towards what the real need was -- work related and then survival at the grocery store and other places like that, gas stations ...the stuff that the workers really needed to know." Now, when the migrants come to North Carolina, "The most asked question when we start going around meeting the migrants for the first time is, 'Hey, when are the classes getting started? Please get a teacher over here. Get some books'" (Gupton). Gupton considers this an investment in North Carolina's economy which appears to need the migrant farm labor right now. He continues, "If we look after the workers while they're here, then they'll be back. They'll be back again because they know they're going to get English courses here."

Finch also has been involved with migrant farmworker basic education efforts through the MSFA. He found that "The farmworkers who seem to want an education the most were those who did not speak English. They had no access to classrooms because they had no vehicles to get there and they didn't know where the schools were." Finch has established relationships with a number of ABE programs that operate in counties using migrant farm labor. He explains, "The nature of the relationship depends on the person who is in the position of running ABE/ESL, GED programs, continuing education, and that's the reason why it's hard to characterize [our] association in one way or the other. It varies from community college to community college." In some cases he simply provides referrals to the local ABE program; in other cases MSFA provides students with transportation to on-campus classes or provides some training for the instructors or program administrators. Sometimes the ABE program and the MSFA ESL programs collaborate, combining the resources and capabilities of each to meet the needs of the farmworkers.

Student Support Services. Programs also try to create linkages with community and community college resources to provide support services for their students. Brower, for example, is employed as a counselor by special services in her institution; many ABE students qualify as special services recipients and are able to participate in counseling sessions she provides for the ABE program. Sometimes transportation and childcare can be provided by community organizations, as well as assistance with housing, food and heating fuel in the winter.

Local Public Schools. Relationships with local public school systems can be seen as a linkage or as a problem. Young adults are required to have a release form signed by the school superintendent or a parent in order to participate in ABE. Some instructors feel that the ABE program is being used as a "dumping ground" by their local public schools for students with whom they are unable or unwilling to work. This creates problems for instructors as Cleary explains,

> I would like to see the statistics on how many sixteen and seventeen year olds I have as correlated with other areas, I think it would just astound anybody and that's not what we're here for, but, you know, I can't say no to these kids.... I've had some with drug problems and some with alcohol problems. I've even had guys to smoke pot in the bathroom.

Merritt, another instructor, would like some liaison with the public schools; she believes that, "If I could know some of their problems, or some of the backgrounds of these high school and junior high school kids that come to me, perhaps I could deal with their frustration or avoid the frustration I feel." Administrators agree with instructors that this group of students presents unique problems: "We're finding that we get a lot of sixteen, seventeen, eighteen year olds. ..and the most important thing and the most damaging thing of all, they have not learned how to have self control."

LEARNING CENTERS VS. CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION

There usually are some alternatives for students coming to campus that do not exist in off-campus locations. For example, one program provides a choice of learning lab or classroom instruction for ABE students on campus; off campus, the student only has the classroom opportunity. Price explains her perception of the importance of providing alternatives:

> Sometimes you'll get students who come in that have 'hidden agendas,' and we don't always know why they're here. They tell us they're here to get the GED or other reasons but a lot of times it's social. They've been out of school a couple of years, and they miss it. They don't really miss high school, they miss having that social experience. Those are the

> students that are really suited for [a] class because they need that social interaction as well as the education. I'm not downplaying the education but they also have needs that are bringing them out that don't really have anything to do with raising their basic skills level.

The distinction between learning lab and classroom may be more illusory than real, however. Price, a learning center director, admits, "When you say self-paced or individualized what you are really talking about is what goes on in the learning center is no different from what goes on in the classes. You find out where the student is and use whatever materials you have at hand to get him where he needs to be." Foley, an ABE director, is "proud" that they do not have a learning center. She explains that in classes the students,

> are there as a group but what they do as a group is very little. More than anything the teacher is circulating around the room helping each person individually. But when you say learning lab, I guess I get the picture of students coming in and sitting down and doing their own thing and then maybe taking material up to a desk for a teacher to check which is not at all what we do.

In fact, the instructors circulate in many learning labs and sit at their desks in some classrooms. The major distinction between labs and classrooms appears to be the larger diversity of learning agendas present in the lab, including regular curriculum students as well as ABE and GED participants.

Volunteers assist instructors in both learning labs and classrooms. Some ABE program personnel have been involved in establishing and providing leadership for local Literacy Councils which then provide a source of Laubach-trained volunteers for the classrooms. Volunteers also come from local Voluntary Action Centers, the Contact Literacy Center and other volunteer programs such as RSVP and in response to articles in the mass media and the suggestions of friends. In addition, many instructors encourage GED graduates to participate in Laubach training and then to return to volunteer in the ABE program.

Foley explains the role of volunteers: "We use them in the presence of the instructor. That way the instructor is constantly monitoring these students' progress and the instructor is there to answer questions or to help guide volunteers if he or she needs guidance." Volunteers also work individually with basic reading students while the instructor is working with other members of a class. It is important to note here that the volunteers may in fact have just as much training as many of the instructors with whom they are working.

SITES AND FACILITIES

Context

Most programs operate a number of class sites throughout the counties for which they are responsible. They are in community buildings such as churches and public schools; private homes; industrial plants; and local government offices. It is important to recognize that the community location is not the same as having a "community based" or "community-oriented" program. The classes may be located in the community, but they reflect the same orientation to working with individuals as is found in on-campus classes.

Classes are held at many different times during the day and evenings and often represent a linkage developed between the ABE program and a local organization or employer. Work with migrant farmworkers is organized with the assistance of the Employment Security Commission and the Migrant and Seasonal Farmworkers Association, for example.

The process of organizing new class sites may appear simple at first. For example, Rakes explains:

> We will go out and find out exactly what how many people is in this community or industry that are in need of this service, for ABE. What size of suitable facilities, whether it be in the community or in the industry. We go about hiring people that we feel will be suitable for that particular location, get materials, do all the testing and screening and start the class.

However, when programs operate across a number of counties and in many different types of settings, this requires flexible administrators who can assess and plan appropriately for diverse situations.

Identifying a group of adults who are interested in a class is only one step in the development process; the program may not be able to respond positively if there are insufficient students to justify the allocation of an instructor or if a suitable site cannot be found. Rich describes the challenge facing administrators:

> I think you have to fit situations to people or people to situations and that's as near as you could come to finding the ideal situation. And it will vary ten to twelve miles apart-you will find a little community that has particular needs; you go in and try to meet those needs. Twenty-five miles on the other side you'll find some other situation.

Many administrators appear to find the provision of appropriate facilities to be a problem. When classes are held in industrial plants, the room may suddenly be reassigned and the class must move. When classes are held in learning centers, the noise and distraction from other activities interferes. Price explains this situation:

> We're not operating under the best circumstances. We really need a separate room for [the ABE class].... We've just really had a polyglot of people in there, everybody doing their own thing, but it sometimes makes for a lot of people and sometimes confusion which is not necessarily the best thing. I think that it's good for an ABE class to have its own place; and if we ever get to the point where we have some room,

> that's what we'll do. We just have not had the room to be able to splinter them out.

In addition, many elementary schools are not equipped with air conditioning for summer classes and the furniture in many locations, such as day care centers and elementary school rooms, is not appropriate for adults.

Instructors' Perspectives

Many instructors are dedicated to teaching in off campus locations. Barrett, for example, explains, "I'm on their turf. I teach where they live. They don't have to come to campus. They don't have to leave their community and they don't have to leave their environment, it goes to them -- and I go to them." Nonetheless, instructors find the lack of office space and classroom facilities frustrating. Barker, for example, explains "There were really no places to keep folders if we did testing, or it was up to me to carry -- somehow to secure the tests and I could probably still go through my notebook and find test scores written on the back of an envelope." Many instructors describe the problems created by having to carry all of their materials with them and having to shift classrooms without prior notice. Barker's class uses the local school cafeteria; however, "They rent out the cafeteria for certain meetings and so the school generated some income from that and we... we were the stepchildren" (Barker).

Classrooms often are too small. Mitchell, for example, has fifteen students on her class roll but usually only eight or nine attend class. She comments, "I couldn't handle it if they all came," because, "I don't think there's even fifteen seats in there." In addition, classrooms may lack basic equipment such as blackboards or book shelves. Mitchell comments, "If I just had one book shelf, you know, I could get my stuff out where everybody could see it better." There is no place to store materials that are not being used presently, nor is there a place to sit to prepare for class in many cases. Instructors do not "complain" about these situations. They, like their administrators, consider these problems simply to be part of the "reality" of the world of ABE.

Students' Perspectives

We found that once adults decide they are interested in returning to school, the local community college comes to mind quickly. Many students report "knowing" about the existence of GED programs for many years; indeed, at least one-third of the students we interviewed had been involved in a program previously, in the military, in North Carolina or in another state. Many have been in and out of the same local program three and four times over as much as a ten year period.

However, students differentiate between learning about the ABE program and finding out about the specific program site at which they now are attending. Thus, recruitment efforts which provide information about local sites may be as important as efforts to involve "first time" ABE students. Some adults did not want to go to the community college campus, either because of the distance or because they find it threatening. When program sites are located in their neighborhoods or in their work places, many students echo Jackson's sentiments: "I reckon, it's 'cause where I'm at, you know, staying here and they got school here, just come here right at my door and I decided, 'I b'lieve I'll go.'" Particularly as students get older, the distance they have to travel to the program appears to increase as a factor in their decisions to enroll. Davice, for instance, had been thinking about enrolling in the program at her local community college, but felt it was too far away. She took advantage of the program when she happened to hear about a new site that was closer to her home.

Administrative personnel and instructors describe the importance of community sites, but they also see many community sites as relatively transitory. The site will exist for as long as it can be administratively justified. It may be, however, that the transient nature of individual class sites has some relationship to student participation that should be further investigated.

INCREASING PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

Recruiters

Methods and Responsibilities. Increasing numbers of programs are employing recruiters now to support the program development process; this appears to be one of the impacts of the change to curriculum level funding, since the new funding provides an incentive for increasing enrollment. Recruiters tend to have a background in education, although not necessarily adult education. They either know the community very well or they are willing to spend a lot of time in a community getting to know the people and their interests. They are persons who enjoy talking to others and who believe deeply in the mission of the Community College system and the purposes of the ABE program. Beebe describes the responsibilities of a recruiter working for her:

> She has concentrated here, going from door to door, neighborhood to neighborhood where our concept is to canvass the entire neighborhood and use any kind of references we can get there to call on someone else, to try to get that person involved, either as a student or, we're also trying to recruit instructors in those neighborhoods. We much prefer, if we can possibly do it, getting an instructor who actually lives there.

At times, local instructors present problems, as Calder observes, "There have been people who say, 'Yes, I want to go to class but I don't want to go to such and such because she's my neighbor and I don't want her teaching me,'" but more often employing local persons as instructors is seen as successful.

Recruiters will "contact anyone that'll listen about the program" Byrd, and they use a multitude of avenues to communicate their messages about the availability of ABE. These include: letters to local ministers, civic leaders, and education personnel; notices on church bulletin boards; posters, brochures and fliers distributed to school children, through community businesses and in grocery store bags; speeches at PTA meetings, churches and civic organizations; public service announcements on radio and television; newspaper stories; mass mailings through the city directory; and referral linkages with organizations such as the Employment Security Commission and the courts. Recruiters recognize that many of their methods use print media which is not accessible to those they would like to recruit. Byrd explains their intent:

> We realize that people that cannot read do not know about [ABE], so,... for example, if a letter went to an apartment house, and a teenager was there, a daughter, or a granddaughter, and this adult got it in the mail, and told the teenager, 'Well, how about reading this letter?' Well, that teenager that the individual felt comfortable enough to say, 'Read to me,' that person might turn and say, 'This is what you need.' So we rely on the friends and relatives.

Many times recruiters go from door to door, talking with people about the program and enlisting their assistance as referral sources or instructors if they are not potential students. At other times recruiters simply spend time in a central place in the community, talking to those who come by and spreading the word about ABE. Calder explains one of his methods:

> Sometimes the way I recruit is just go and set in an old country store and pull up a coca cola crate and drink a coca cola ... and I don't ever stress the point that I'm there recruiting but I've been doing it so long when I come by, everybody knows what I do and they refer me to someone or somebody come up and say, 'You know, I need to tell you something, I didn't finish -- I need to do that thing.' So, I've got more or less an establishment now.

Calder expands on his role as a recruiter:

> You have to know people. You have to make contacts. You have to be the type of person who is so flexible that you can go in any setting, whether it's all black, or all white, or all mixed, and have no hangups about it.... So you do whatever is necessary to get the people involved, and once you get them involved you have to go back and let them know that you appreciate them and care about them, and you have to send letters of thanks to these agencies and these people that you've dealt with -- thanking them for what they've done.

Childcare is a particularly troublesome area for many students; Holm explains their approach in some cases: "Now what we do sometimes in classes that we run in homes or in churches is that we ask the mothers to rotate babysitting. If we have ten people then that means that maybe once out of the six weeks this person will be asked to baby sit twice in a course." Sometimes childcare can be provided with community assistance, as in this case:

> We did at one time have a childcare service worked out with the thrift shop... wherein if a person showed proof that she attended her class from nine o'clock until twelve o'clock, then the thrift shop would pay the [local] nursery the babysitting fee for that child or those children for that particular day. That worked well but then that money ran out. Here we are back to square one. (Holm)

The recruiters try to establish relationships with the students they enroll, acting as advisors, counselors and resource brokers and investigating with a phone call or a note when students are absent from class. Byrd explains, "I try to get to know the people that come into the program because I have found when a student, an adult, becomes familiar with you, and feels comfortable with you, it makes them want to come." They help students use the entire range of community resources in addition to the ABE program:

> We have a multitude of agencies that we can refer people to when they have a problem.... In other words we can refer them for food stamps, or free food, we can refer them, if they need the rent paid, we know where to refer them. If they need housing, we know where to refer them. If they need health care, we know where to refer them. And so you see, it's kind of a family kind of a thing. (Holm)

Recruiters donate many hours to the ABE program, as Byrd describes:

> I spend 20 hours a week -- that's what I put down on my time -- for ABE. There's no way that an individual can really say that they could take 20 hours and recruit because I visit class sites at night, I would go and speak with different organizations that would have meetings in the evenings. So I really cannot say exactly how many hours I do on my own time, also.

Mark expresses it another way: "You have to be able to go anywhere. Now that sounds a little broad, but that's the way it is. You have to go, if you're walking down the street, you have to sleep, eat, and think ABE twenty four hours a day."

Supervision and Support for Instructors and Students. Recruiters do more than simply encourage adults to enroll in the program. They often set up neighborhood classes, which means they must find an instructor once they have identified a group of interested students in an area. Some recruiters will teach a neighborhood class themselves if they are unable to find an instructor initially, as Woodley explains: "If I can't find somebody else, then I will work it myself, if I find a number of people that are anxious to do it, until I can find the appropriate person that would take a class." Once an instructor is found, the recruiter is an advisor to the instructor, particularly if the instructor is new to ABE. The recruiter is the instructor's link to the larger ABE program.

Recruiters try to visit and observe classes, as Woodley explains:

> I'm observing the teacher and how she puts over the program. I'm observing the students to see how they take to her. Sometimes I don't say anything -- I just sit and listen and watch. Maybe I'll walk around and see what they're doing and tell them 'You can do it,' you know, make them feel welcome -- to want to do and to work faster or work more to accommodate what they would like to learn. And always commend them for a good job that they're doing and that's one way to keep them, you know, when they see somebody else coming in to look at them -- they're going to work a little harder and to prove to you that they can do it and that encourages them when they see you.

Once a student is engaged in the program, that student multiplies the effect of the recruiter by bringing friends and relatives, as Mark explains, "As a general rule, my biggest recruiters are those who come into the program. It's just like setting up dominoes. Once you topple one over, it picks up momentum."

Today there is an atmosphere of expansion, and many new classes are not receiving supervision and support once they are set up. With administrators responsible for many different programs, it is difficult to provide the assistance instructors need, particularly when the instructors have received little or no training. Recruiters are told that they are to set up as many classes as possible, minimizing the time they spend supporting those already organized. Lankler explains, "[The] problem is that we're doing so much, it's hard to do a good job to start and support these ABE classes because they need a lot of attention. Not only the students, but the teachers need a lot of attention and help -- supplies, etc."

It appears that the broad role definition of recruiters overlaps with that of instructors in terms of providing emotional, psychological and social support for students. Recruiters seem to reinforce the belief that the ABE program is responsible for meeting all the needs of all the adults with less than a high school education and, when they are responsible for hiring and supervising instructors, they probably contribute to the instructors' process of defining their roles this broadly. Recruiters may have quite an important role in transferring the culture of the campus-based program to classes in remote locations.

One of the underlying assumptions of recruiters' efforts is that instructors can be effective with a group of students whose characteristics are mixed in any number of ways, including skills attainment levels, schooling background, learning preferences and educational goals. Their dedication to identifying and involving adults in ABE and GED programs may be undermined by the inability of many instructors to meet this enormous set of demands and the inability of many recruiters to provide meaningful analysis and assistance to the instructors.

Students' Perspectives

The majority of adults in this sample were unaware that they were participating in an ABE program; they simply know it as a GED program that helps them learn how to read and write first. They learned about the program or the specific site at which they are attending from friends, family members and co-workers, in the great majority of cases. These referral sources may be individuals who earned a GED after preparing in the program, developed better reading and writing skills through the program, or participated in a wide range of continuing education and regular curriculum courses.

In addition, some students heard about the program from social workers and counselors. Program brochures, newspaper inserts, flyers given out in grocery stores and distributed to homes, and community college course listings provided initial information about program availability in only a few cases; more often they were used to identify specific program sites and schedules. When programs were set up in work places or in specific settings such as housing developments for the elderly or migrant labor camps, recruiters or personnel managers actively solicited participation. Some students had little choice, however. Many of the younger students were required to attend by judges, parole officers, rehabilitation programs and concerned parents.

Some students who have been enrolled previously return because their circumstances change. For example, Abernathy had stopped attending previously when she got a new job; now,

> I was in-between jobs and I got to talking one day about my schooling that I hadn't been going to, but I had quit and [my husband] said 'Well, if you want to try it, anything you want to do is fine, I'll back you up one hundred percent anything you want to try at.' So, that's when I dropped in down here and checked in with them and started back.

The actual process of enrolling in a program is described with striking consistency. Many students had hesitated for years because they felt embarrassed: "If you can't read or write, you just don't come out and tell somebody 'Hey, I can't do this or I can't do that'" (Seymour). When they finally decided to enroll, however, students describe getting into the program as easy, nonthreatening and quick. Goodleigh's experience appears to be typical: "I called on the phone and said do you have any classes or anything for [me] and they told me yes, to come by, so I came by and started coming."

Program Expansion

All directors agree that they have seen (and some have been largely responsible for) a great deal of growth in the ABE program over the last twenty years. The number of staff, students and classes has steadily increased in most colleges and now, with the employment of additional recruiters on the staff, enrollment is beginning to increase rapidly in many programs. Directors also claim that instructors are better qualified now, with the majority having attained Bachelor's degrees, and that there are increased student retention rates. In addition, directors feel that programs have increased their flexibility in scheduling classes and providing ongoing enrollment opportunities for students. As might be expected, the administrators look at administrative and managerial aspects of the program: numbers enrolled, numbers retained, and progress on the program hierarchy. When the numbers are strong, directors feel the program is going well. The general consensus is, "If you have a high retention rate then more than likely you are doing something right; it's got to be effective" (Rakes).

It also is important to note that administrators emphasize program expansion -- setting up additional classes and enrolling more students -- much more than program improvement. There appears to be an underlying assumption that in order to meet the needs of the thousands of adults who have not previously been involved in ABE it is necessary only to do "more of the same." New approaches to program development are not being called for and the effectiveness of existing programs is not being questioned.

This report questions the extent to which simply multiplying existing efforts is going to substantially alter the number of adults whose needs are being served by the program, however. Students attest to the fact that they have known about the program for many years, in many cases. They come back to a program when their life circumstances change rather than because the program has changed in ways that facilitate involvement. It is important for program administrators to check their assumptions and, perhaps, redirect their attention to increasing the program alternatives available rather than mainly to reproducing existing efforts in additional locations.

IMPLICATIONS

Although each program adapts to meet the specific circumstances of its environment and resources, the ABE programs in North Carolina all are variations on one theme: individually oriented programs for mainstreaming adults into middle class society. Administrators describe a variety of community sites in which they operate classes, but these are simply "facilities" and locations rather than efforts to work collaborativly with communities in true "community based" programs. Recruiters spend time getting to know the members of a community in order to convince them to take advantage of the ABE program's efforts; this is in contrast to working with community members to develop programs specifically oriented to meeting the community's needs and interests.

Directors certainly can make the choice to approach ABE instruction through individual rather than community efforts. It is not clear, however, that directors recognize that they are choosing one particular program model since they do not seem to be able to place that model in any broader perspective. Rather, it appears that directors are working on the basis of their limited experience; their programs reflect the individually oriented model that predominates not only in ABE but in most social and educational service efforts. Directors do not seem to have a critical perspective on the limits and strengths of this model but rather to assume that this framework is necessary for the development of educational programs.

Directors, recruiters and administrative personnel do not describe involving students in deciding when, where or how to hold classes which may reflect an assumption that students are unable to collaborate in the program development process. Decisions such as these are held as administrative prerogatives based on institutional factors such as funding levels and the ratio of student participation to instructors' salaries. However, the administrators may be dealing with problems that are at least partly the result of the structures they have chosen rather than being endemic to the provision of adult basic education.

SUMMARY

ABE administrative personnel are dedicated to providing adult basic education to the citizens of North Carolina. They work long hours on ABE in addition to a multitude of other responsibilities; they create linkages with many agencies, programs and organizations in the community and the community college in order to reach as many adults as possible with a wide range of services. ABE programs are oriented to individual social and educational mobility rather than to community development or collaborative effort.

ABE administrative personnel are oriented to expansion, fueled partly by the change to FTE funding. They are employing special recruiters in increasing numbers and constantly are faced with decisions about allocating instructors to off campus class sites. Many of these sites have limitations, but are used nonetheless in order to bring program services to students' neighborhoods and workplaces. When the site is considered no longer viable the class is discontinued. Students appear to consider the class site an important factor, but the relationship between their participation decisions and this transient nature of sites has not been explored. Site decisions are seen as administrative responsibilities.

Some administrators seem to hold beliefs about the difference between learning centers and classrooms that are not supported by our evidence. The major difference between learning centers and classrooms as instructional sites appears to be the range of skill levels being addressed; learning centers include students from the curriculum as well as continuing education programs and, therefore, personnel must be able to address a much broader range of learning agendas.

The continuing growth and expansion of ABE in North Carolina reflects the untiring efforts of recruiters, directors, instructors and other personnel who believe in the mission of the community college system deeply. Their quest for program expansion, however laudable, must be placed within a broader framework of resource and supervisory support for instructors. Continuous enrollment of new students and identification of new sites must be mediated by issues of program quality in order to build a strong foundation for the future of ABE in North Carolina.

CHAPTER 4: ABE STUDENTS AS ADULT LEARNERS

Adults who enroll in adult basic education programs have made the decision to engage in an educational program sponsored by a formal educational institution. Schools, however, are only one context in which learning takes place; ABE students also are learners on their jobs, in their homes, and in other contexts which are part of their rich daily lives. It is important to understand these adults as learners in this broad sense in order to appreciate the skill and experience with learning that they bring to their participation in ABE. This chapter attempts to present the complexities of ABE students as adult learners through examining their schooling, employment and life experience. Although each individual's background and goals are different, they fall into certain patterns. The literature in ABE often presents broad stereotypes; this study has attempted to move beyond those stereotypes to achieve an understanding of the underlying meanings students attribute to learning, schooling and program participation.

PRIOR SCHOOLING

Adults come to ABE classes with diverse educational backgrounds, and their prior experiences with schooling influence their approach to and goals for participation in the ABE program. Students in this sample left public school for a variety of complex reasons; indepth examination of the circumstances and factors contributing to leaving public school is beyond the scope of this study. It is more important to provide insight into the nature of prior schooling experiences and students' feelings about those experiences. Their overall experience of schooling, rather than the specific circumstances under which they left, will influence their expectations and aspirations in the present.

In general, ABE students who are now older than 45 remained in school for fewer years and attained lower grade levels than those who now are in their late teens and twenties. This may reflect increasing access to schooling, increasing recognition of the importance of education, and increasing enforcement of compulsory schooling laws. Those adults whose public schooling was recent, or relatively recent (within the last fifteen years) generally remained in public school until they were at least 16 years old and, in some cases, until they were 17 or 18. The majority of the students in this group were in the grade appropriate to their ages at the time they left school, although a few were one or two years behind their age cohorts and another small group were in ungraded special education classes. ABE students who now are in their thirties and early forties also often remained in school until they were sixteen, seventeen or eighteen, in the grades appropriate to their ages. In this group, however, larger numbers of persons who were in grades significantly lower than their age cohorts begin to appear.

Relatively few ABE students now in their late forties and fifties remained in school until they were sixteen years old and most never moved as far as the seventh or eighth grades. It appears that compulsory attendance laws were not enforced during that period as they are now and children often left school at twelve or thirteen years of age or attended very sporadically into their teens. Adults now older than sixty tended to leave school even earlier, during the first few years of elementary education. Only one of the adults older than sixty in our sample remained in school until high school.

Many adults in this study describe school as an arena of physical, emotional, psychological and social turmoil in the midst of which learning academic skills suffered. Some liked school a great deal and were sorry to leave while others disliked school and looked forward to quitting. All have in common the experience of being alienated from the culture of the school as a result of some combination of personal attributes, family circumstances and the existing school norms and structures. Many of these adults found school an environment in which they constantly were confronted with their inabilities, with the ways in which they differed from the "norm," as MacIntosh describes: "I couldn't read, you know, and people make fun of you then.... And I begin to lose confidence in myself about trying to learn."

Grade levels are supposed to correspond to skill levels, but many adults now in ABE found that the system did not work that way. They often were promoted even though their skills were far below those associated with their grades. They left when it appeared that their efforts to learn were futile or when their sense of integrity demanded it. For example, Oates claims that, "after the 10th grade I was realizing I had made it to the 10th grade, but I can't hardly read. I wasn't understanding -- I wasn't making it, so I quit." And Coney concurs: "I was still getting grades. I was getting passed for nothing and I don't want anything ....I want to work for it. I don't want it just handed out to me." These adults saw public school teachers as authority figures rather than facilitators of learning, as Nichols describes, "If you needed any help, that was just you. You had to figure it out on your own."

Many of the adults in this study never really became engaged in the public schooling process. George, for example, describes: "I never did go to school.... I'd always cut class or didn't go- or catch the bus [and] when I got off the bus I'd go on and skip school anyway.... It was boring and you always had [racial] fights and stuff." Black students, particularly, found schooling irrelevant, as Kalen describes:

> I was looking at other things, mostly boys. And into drugs and drinking and just having a good time because my family didn't really know anything about me....[School] didn't really interest me... you know, me being black and listening to -- I'm not prejudiced or anything, but listening to all the white people's history instead of black people's history so that wasn't really interesting to me.

Pandel's experience was a bit different: "I was pretty rowdy as a kid away from home. We weren't allowed to be rowdy at home. And I was, like your groups or gangs or whatever, I was usually the leader of it.... All of us quit school about the same time.... about six or seven of us. "

Many women found schools unsympathetic and inflexible when it was necessary to juggle a number of roles in addition to student, such as wife or mother. Decater, for example, was unable to arrange to study at home even though she reports, "I never got in trouble or nothing because I was a good student. ...I didn't want to quit but I did because the doctor told me not to go to work or nothing for the first few months until I had [the baby]." Bach felt the pressures of supporting a new child:

> I was married, working a parttime job and pregnant. And one of them- well, two of them went, my husband went and school went because I had a son- a baby coming soon enough and I had to have something to support it and I wasn't about to go on welfare and so I went to cosmetology school which you didn't need a high school diploma.

Goodleigh also was frustrated by trying to integrate schooling and the pressures of her life:

> My family was in a mess. .... my sister was a drug addict and things wasn't too good at home. My brother was older than me and he'd drink a lot and I didn't have much determination to go to school.... My Dad wasn't too pleasant to live with; he was doing some things he ought not to do.... I was trying to stay with my sister, too, even though she was on drugs, to help her and take care of her little boy - she has a little boy and he was about three years old and I was staying with him and I guess I was mentally involved with taking care of him and physically, too. So, I had just seen so much so I just figured hey what's the use, you know.

Men also found it difficult to reconcile being a public school student with their other responsibilities. While many young women were concerned with maintaining homes and raising children, young men had to work on the family farm or bring in supplemental income. For example, Royster's father was a dairy farmer and the family moved often, so Royster's schooling was inconsistent. He fell behind in his school work and eventually quit: "I got big enough to work on the farm so I just quit school and went to working on the farm to help my father out and to help my family out. I had a rather large family and it's hard to handle the work and send everybody to school." Carradine was seventeen years old and still in the seventh grade. He explains:

> See, I couldn't go. I had to work, you know. Like I said, my mother and father separated and it was 4 of us- 3 boys and 1 girl. And didn't neither one of us get no education much because as soon as we got 7 or 8 years old, we went out and started working.... See, what we done, we would hire ourselves out like that and on rainy days- during the time of the year when you couldn't farm, we would go to school. So, we didn't get a chance to get much school like that, see, because back

> in those days, seemed like it would never rain. And I wanted to finish school... I wanted, you know, to try to make something- but, you know.... All of my equal ...had finished the 7th and had gone to a higher school. And there I was still in the 5th Grade, you know.... I just got ashamed because I was the biggest thing on the yard. All the other little children under me and in the 5th and 6th and 7th Grade and here I am, you know, big old guy, standing up there looking over top of everybody. I got ashamed and I just quit.

Many adults now in ABE remember struggling with the feelings of alienation generated by social ostracism that was a result of being older than the other children in their classes. Brookes, for instance, left school when he was thirteen years old in the fifth grade in 1959. His recollection:

> I always druther work than go to school. I hated school, with a passion. I coulda blowed the school up with dynamite. I don't know. I guess the worst thing about going to school was getting behind in the classes.... They had so many in the class, if you didn't do well, they just moved you to the back, and didn't ask you no questions, or... you finally got used to a piece of furniture.... Well, I just got so far behind that I had to have been in the second grade and I was already two foot taller than any of the rest of the students. That makes it hard on you. ...Younger [children], they got no heart for one another. They don't think of one another's feelings, you know.

Another form of alienation related to poverty; many poor children felt socially ostracized when unable to display the material possessions symbolic of "belonging" to the prevailing culture. Jones, for example, remembers: "My mother, you know, her husband had died, and she had to work, and she really wasn't makin' nuthin, and couldn't buy us anything to go to school. Half the time we didn't even have food. So must of the time I played hookey because the girls laughed at me and talked about me." In addition, social ostracism was a response to differing cultural backgrounds. Kearns, for example, explains:

> My parents moved north when I was fifteen and I fell out of school because I did not cope well with the northern kids, you know. I was southern, they were northern, I didn't know how to cope with them. We didn't dress alike, we didn't talk alike. I had a southern accent and that was why I fell out of school, I just couldn't take it.

Sometimes the experience of schooling changed for young adults as new circumstances developed which created an inability to maintain their status within the school's rigid hierarchical structure. Shilling, for example, always had maintained A and B grades in school, and was doing well when he was hit by a car and bedridden for a year and a half; the combination of time lost from school and large medical bills resulted in his quitting school and seeking a job. Maber also had been doing well in school: "I enjoyed going to school because I never did miss but one day of school throughout the whole time I went anyhow. That's where you meet different people and learn so much about things." Casey, however, began having five or six epileptic seizures daily and he could not continue in school.

The prevailing view in adult basic education nationally is that ABE students have a history of failure in public schools which has undermined any confidence they might have had in their ability to learn. Focusing on this narrow aspect ignores the larger nature of their experience of public schooling and encourages a purely psychological analysis of ABE students' relationship to their prior schooling. The data presented here suggest that schooling was alienating for a number of reasons, foremost among them the inability of the culture and structure of schools to respond to the concerns, pressures and life circumstances of individual students. From this perspective, individual student "failure" becomes simply one result of the broad conflict between individuals whose characteristics and cultural backgrounds differ from those valued by a system which is organized around middle class norms. This implies that while some students may doubt their ability to learn as a result of prior schooling experiences, they also may doubt the ability of schooling to be relevant, responsive, accepting and appropriate for their lives. Thus, it appears that a rethinking of the relationship between ABE students and their prior schooling experiences is called for, redefining the notion of "failure" and placing it in a broader context.

EMPLOYMENT

The majority of students in this sample are working now and have been working most of their lives. The percentage of unemployed or never employed persons decreases dramatically as students' age increases; their jobs have been unskilled and semi-skilled labor, primarily. Rather than being concerned with finding a particular job, they are glad to have any job that helps pay the bills. In some cases, they work two or three jobs in order to make ends meet. The major sources of employment reported include: dairy, tobacco and cotton farming; saw mills; textile mills; sewing; brick-making; furniture factories; waitressing; cafeteria labor; stock clerk; truck driving; dishwashing; janitorial and maid services; welding; laundry; construction; and child care.

Younger students often describe a succession of part-time, low paying jobs such as dishwasher and waitress. They find these jobs unsatisfactory and do not remain in any one job very long. Older students cite a succession of full-time jobs, often beginning with tobacco or cotton farming when they were young. Jackson's history is not unusual. He grew up living on a farm. Then:

> Well, I was working at the factory, saw mills,... and all places like that.... I have worked in a shipyard one time in Norfolk, Virginia, helped build ships, and there at Fort Bragg a lot, you know,... building them barracks,... and carpentry, I did that, and, up there at the ship yard...helped put piping in and things.... I've been a little of everything 'cept be a

boss-man.

As the economy has worsened many of the older adults find that their long tenure in jobs brings some level of security. They know that their mobility is limited. When they have to find new jobs due to plant closings or lay-offs, they often depend on a network of family and friends to find information about jobs and to assist them with the applications. Friends on the job help them with the small amount of reading and writing that needs to be done. Hayward was in construction work for many years; sometimes inventory lists had to be filled out and his friends assisted: "I was just fortunate enough to be working within a position where people understood."

Younger adults talk about work differently than do the older adults. They do not appear to have a sense of themselves as "workers," which includes a set of skills in which they have pride and a "philosophy" of work. This is partly due to their ages; they simply have not had the long years of work experience found among many of the older ABE students. In addition, it appears to be due to the changing nature of work, particularly for young adults in North Carolina in the past decade. The state is moving slowly from a primarily agricultural and related manufacturing base to an expanded industrial and urbanized economy emphasizing high technology, knowledge and service industries. Farming was central to the development of many older adults' initial attitudes, values and beliefs about work. Farming encourages the development of a particular perspective and relationship to work; many younger adults did not share these formative experiences and this may be reflected in their present approach to employment.

Farming provided early positive learning experiences for most of the older adults in this sample, even when formal schooling was unrewarding. Today these adults are proud of their job-related skills and have learned that they are capable of learning on the job even if they are unable to read and write. Rustin, for example, knows that she learns easily. She fills out her own time sheets since, "It was one girl that was working there -- she showed me one time and after she showed me then I kind of learned it." She has been working in textiles for many years: "I can put my hands on a needle and thread and make whatever I want to make." She attended a two-week training class to learn a new machine; after one night she was allowed to begin working with it.

It is not unusual for these adults to hold a number of positions in the same company, moving into higher paying jobs until they hit the barrier of reading and writing requirements. This kind of employment stability has required frequent learning of new skills and procedures. Adults have developed the ability to analyze a situation and to take appropriate action based upon a set of guidelines they have developed. For example, Pandel's friend hired him at a local service station when he quit school and taught him to work on cars. When Pandel moved to another part of the state he called a service station and "I went over there and just kept hounding them every Monday morning until they give me a job over about a four months period." Pandel's philosophy is clear: "I've learned early to be persistent if you really want something. I think that is one reason I have been able to achieve some pretty good positions, in jobs, income and everything of that nature because if I do see something I want I do go after it."

Malone was brought up on a farm and stayed on the farm until he was about sixteen. Then he started working for a local industry, and had been working there for 26 years when they began automating. He was concerned about losing his job but found he was able to learn to use the machine instead. He explains: "When they first brought it in and set it up I was scared to death. I thought, 'This machine is going to take my job,' and with no education, you don't go out of here and get a job every day." The manufacturer's representative was setting up the machine, and every evening after work, rather than going home, Malone explains, "I'd go back there and talk with him, and you know, help him with what I could. He would show me different things.... That's the way I learned, and after we got it in I [would] sit back there and turned the button just to see what it would do." Malone easily remembered what each button would do, and remains on that job. "I started out there before I was seventeen years old, and I'll be forty-five in December, and I've had a job ever since I dropped out of school really."

Underlying Malone's success appears to be a basic belief in his own ability and a set of internalized beliefs, assumptions and values, or a philosophy, which provides guidance about approaching work. Malone seems to believe in hard work, diligence, and taking responsibility for his own learning. The relationship between education and this philosophy of work is important. Malone is proud of his achievements but adds, "I'd rather have the education." He continues talking about learning the new machine as he explains:

> When you haven't got a education, you have to memorize a lot of things.... On the machine, there's a button there that tells you what each part does and on the panel that I run, it's probably got thirty, thirty-five buttons up here that runs each part of the machine that you can make each do really what the machine was built for; and when you don't have an education, you can't look down there and look at what's wrote up under that button and say, 'Well, this machine will do this,' by reading it. You have to memorize it.

It is important to note that these adults do not believe that education can substitute for experience or for skills learned over the years. Malone again provides some insight:

> Education is a wonderful thing, but you've got to have common brains to go with it, you know what I mean?.... As far as what your machine will do, see we have three or four different size brick that we make; and when, right now we're making what you call a standard size brick. This coming Friday we'll have to change it over and make what we call an oversize brick; and then the buttons don't really matter then if you know what they are. I mean, if you can read it, that's good; but then you go to what we call spacer bows, and there ain't nuthin' wrote on them. They're just different sizes, and you got to know where each one of them goes.

These adults talk about the importance of "common sense" or "mother wit" for responding to daily situations. They value education, but their common sense is responsible for their ability to adapt to new situations, to learn and to apply their knowledge on their jobs. Their philosophy of work presupposes a basic common sense. Kearns explains:

> Sometimes you'll find somebody that is really smart behind the desk but they don't know how to associate with people. ... And sometimes you'll find somebody that knows how to associate with people and if they've got some common sense they can do, you know, I think there's different things in this life that mean a lot to a human being besides being straight As. I mean, I read a book the other day and it said that anybody could be a straight A if you put your mind to it. Now, I'm not sure about that.

The work philosophy and perspective of the older adults provides a foundation upon which ABE programs can build; younger adults, lacking such a philosophy and perspective for the most part, can be expected to require additional assistance as a result.

LIFE EXPERIENCE

The characteristics of ABE students must be understood within the context of their concepts of themselves as learners and their definitions of learning, as well as with reference to their prior employment and educational experiences. Although the conventional wisdom portrays ABE students as fearful of testing their ability to learn, the data collected for this study appear to support a revision of that assumption. Certainly many ABE students are fearful of their ability to succeed in an academic or schooling environment; their prior experience with schooling has been alienating and frustrating. Many of these adults, however, recognize that they have been successful learners outside the schooling system in their jobs and personal lives. They understand that life may have been easier had they completed more schooling, and they are unsure about the extent to which school will build upon their existing competence.

Goodleigh, for example, reflects upon the relationship between her prior learning and her ABE experience. Since she had little formal schooling, she asserts: "School prepares you for these things that you are gonna face when you get older and how to handle it when it comes up, see, so I had to handle it on my own." Goodleigh finds that her class exercises draw upon her knowledge: "After you are older you experience a lot of these things and they just naturally come in place.... Like phrases in the books and you pick out different ones that -- which one would you do. And mostly what you pick out of there is what you do every day." She continues: "I already knew those by living, you know, by going through a lot of things. It just comes natural, I don't know, some things in the books, it comes natural because I've already did those things and experienced it." Goodleigh summarizes: "School prepares you to be ready for these things and if you don't go to school and get it, you've got to live it." Goodleigh is underlining the significance of being an adult in the learning process.

Many older adults have learned some reading skills with the assistance of friends, as Dillard describes: "I couldn't write my name. Me and a man here in [the town] we started going together and he learnt me how to count money, he learnt me how to read, he learnt me how to write my name." In order to learn some reading skills many of these adults have developed learning strategies specifically for reading and writing and they compare these with what they are taught in ABE. Pandel describes his experience:

> I've basically taught myself. I find it very interesting in this out here because some of the first books that they gave me was to teach you how to read a little bit better -- somewhat better -- and was talking about looking for a word within a word when you don't know the word and I've been doing that for years.

Clement also has learned how to learn on his own:

> I learned a lot by listening to other people read things. I really don't have a lot of trouble figuring out what a word is. My biggest trouble is writing it out after ...without looking at it. Most things I can figure out on my own. It may take me longer than it does you but I can figure it out.

Many of these adults have developed specific strategies as learners. Generally seen as "coping skills" within the framework of ABE, these learning skills tend to be dismissed rather than built upon. Oates, for example, describes his ability to use his memory:

> After 26 years of living and not knowing how to read too good, you learn a way of getting around. If you can't talk too good, you learn how to use your hands. If you can't walk too good then you can get a wheel chair or crutches or something, so I guess I was just smart enough to know how to get around it.... I had memorized it. If I look at a sentence here so many times, if I see it over there on your paper, I can tell you what it is.

Mosely has been running his own salvage business for a number of years, but problems developed: "I meet so many people that I need the name and I need it wrote down. They want to call me, they want to buy something but you can't write the name down... you can't remember all the phone numbers and it's getting very difficult." So he has developed a system: "If they've got a four wheel drive, I put four plus four and I know they ain't very few I know that own a four wheel drive.... The blind's got a system and the man that can't read got a system and that's my system."

Sometimes the "system" is oriented to "getting over" in schooling situations and may actually be dysfunctional for learning. Hooper, for example, seems to have learned that mobility in the system tends to be based upon test grades rather than on his own learning and growth. Hooper explains his system:

> I can [answer] a question on any paper and still wouldn't know what I've read but the answer will be right.... [I] got a big word there and [I] look down on my paper and you got about four answers to pick and you pick the word -- this is the way I do it, I pick the weirdest name for an answer... and the answer is right so I play along.

The influence of prior schooling also can be inferred from the fact that many ABE students describe themselves as "slow learners." This implies that they are comparing themselves to some normative framework, generally developed during their public schooling years. Forrest was asked to explain her image of herself as a slow learner; her response is typical of many ABE students: "If I get to a word that I don't know and someone is trying to teach me how to spell that word, then it takes me longer than I think it should and that's why I say I'm slow." Examples always are pulled from classroom situations; they do not appear to reflect adults' assessments of their learning abilities in other arenas of their lives.

PARTICIPATION IN ABE

Goals

Clearly, schooling has not been central to the lives of most of the adults in this sample. They have been working, raising families and involving themselves in local civic and religious organizations. They often have driver's licenses after taking the test orally although their mobility tends to be limited to the local area. Their parents often had little schooling; their siblings sometimes completed school but often left before graduation. Any personal involvement with the schooling system usually focuses on their children; some of the adults in this sample take active roles in local PTAs. Many of the adults in this sample have lived in their communities for a long time, and are members of extensive, close-knit social networks. They are aware of their local community colleges and often have friends and family members who have attended for a variety of courses of study even though they have not personally been involved.

Many studies provide a list of "reasons" or personal "goals" for students' participation in ABE. These may include the desire to read to children, assist children with homework, qualify for a job promotion or attain a GED. It appears from the data gathered for this study that these are not fundamental reasons or goals for enrollment, but rather specific desired application contexts. In other words, these are tasks, roles or functions requiring reading and writing skills that are confronting adults at this point in their lives. They hope that ABE program participation will enable, but not be limited to, accomplishment of these applications. When asked to describe their understanding of a "successful student" in the ABE program, students typically answer similarly to George: "Someone who can read anything."

It is important to explore some of the complexity of this apparently simple response. ABE students desire a skill level that will allow them a measure of independence when dealing with reading and writing tasks. Furthermore, they are interested in being able to apply their skills to the demands of their own environments, at home or at work, and they want a skill level that will allow for future growth and change. They also would like to be able to develop a positive attitude toward reading and writing tasks, as Rains explains: "Where I could read, really read good, I mean it wouldn't scare me or nothing."

Although legislatively ABE is oriented to employment-related reading tasks, ABE students include leisure pursuits among their criteria for skill attainment. While looking at a crossword puzzle book, Gentel claims, "I like these and if I could pick one of these up and go through it and pronounce all the words and do all the puzzles, then I would know how to read." Good readers also can respond appropriately to a range of unforeseen reading tasks. Royster explains:

> Just sitting down reading book after book, I don't think that's a good reader. Because I think being a good reader is just being able to read something somebody hands you or anything, you know, a paper or a joke -- to be able to make sense out of it. If you can read like that, then you can basically read anything you want to.

Some students differentiate between reading and "understanding." Miller, for example, believes he "could read pretty good" when he enrolled in ABE; however, he could not understand what he read. Frison claims that a good reader is one who can "understand what you are reading." Many students appear to see a relationship between facility naming words and comprehension. Detre explains further that a good reader can,

> Read a article and understanding it, instead of still being puzzled after you get through with it. Like I could read something, and they'd be a lot of words I wouldn't know, and I wouldn't understand what I read and I might have it backwards, you know, from what it said. Not having to stop and figure out the word. Just know it when you see it.

Students appear to categorize different types of reading and their schemes seem to reflect school exercises. Capps, for example, defines reading: "You talk and tell about them.... Read the book and then tell what happened." Petersen feels that reading the newspaper is "not like reading" because "you just have to look at the article at the top and you almost know what's in it." "Real reading," or "putting your mind to a story," according to Petersen, requires you "to keep your mind on the whole story until the end to get all of what's in it."

Adults enroll in ABE programs to improve their academic skills -- reading, writing, and computing -- as a means toward a diverse array of potential ends such as high school diploma attainment, additional schooling, enhanced quality of personal, family and community life, improved job performance or increased employment options. Secondarily, some students seek interpersonal interaction, assistance with daily life tasks and resource information. They come to ABE programs with a set of learning skills and concepts about reading and their own learning ability.

Students' learning perspectives may be most easily understood through reference to their prior schooling, their prior learning experiences and their present place in their life cycles. Students' analyses of their need for education are partly based upon the roles, functions and tasks they are facing at this point in their lives. This is mediated by prior schooling experiences which shape their understanding of the goals for which schooling may be appropriate and the nature of the costs and benefits which may accrue. Prior learning experiences shape students' outlook as well as provide a foundation of basic learning skills.

Life Circumstances

The participation of students labeled learning disabled and those in the English as a Second Language program primarily is related to their present life circumstances. Some students appear to have a range of intellectual handicaps, although there is no formal diagnosis. They often were institutionalized when young or attended special education classes. They may be working in sheltered workshops and often are living under supervision in group homes or with their families. Although there often appear to be memory and learning problems, these adults seem to be able to learn some limited reading and writing skills. Enrollment in ABE may be related to their place in their life cycles as that affects the availability of helpers. There usually are family members or social workers who act as caretakers for the adults in this group. When these caretakers die, move away or take on other responsibilities such as raising their own families, motivation for program participation is strengthened.

However, the participation of adults in this group relates primarily to their desire to learn how to accomplish practical, everyday reading and writing tasks which are important and essentially the same at all stages in their lives. Their prior learning experiences often have not provided opportunities for this learning. They would like to be able to write and read their names, addresses and telephone numbers and to be able to add money so that they will not be embarrassed at the store. They would like the greater independence brought by being able to pay their own bills, figure their pay checks and fill in the forms at the doctor's office. These students feel that coming to school provides a structure for daily life and an opportunity to meet and interact with other people. Dawson describes herself as "backward and awkward" when she first came to class; now that has changed. Developing social skills is as important as learning to read.

Another group of students whose participation is related primarily to their life circumstances and backgrounds rather than to their present place in their life cycles are those whose primary language is not English. They attend the English as a Second Language

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(ESL) program to learn English and, in many cases, to continue with their education. These adults are quite diverse and come from many different countries, although Hispanic and Oriental backgrounds predominate. Most ESL participants came to the United States and to North Carolina because they knew someone here already -- a friend or family member. Some are literate in their native languages, while others are not; some have completed the equivalent of secondary and, in some cases, university education in their native countries while others received little or no schooling. Many ESL participants have come to the United States seeking refuge from poverty, war and repression in their own countries. They want to learn English and create new, better lives in this country.

ESL students want to learn conversational English needed for daily living and for additional participation in schooling; reading and writing English are the next level of goals. Their life circumstances vary, but always require some proficiency with English for any type of public contact and independent functioning in North Carolina and in American society. Those in the migrant stream have difficult jobs that do not require English, but they would like to be able to create alternatives to migrant labor and move into the larger realm of American life. Many women from other countries are married to servicemen and are raising children in the United States now. They want to be able to help their children with school work. They also want to be able to fulfill daily responsibilities independently, such as shopping, filling the car at the gas station, making American friends and conversing in English. Some of these women plan to attend the local community college simply to keep learning, while others would like to qualify for jobs on their own. Marshall, for example, is from Thailand, and never became literate in her native language. She attended school rarely when she was young because she had to help the family in the village. She married a serviceman and moved to the United States. Now she would like to learn to read and write; in order to live more easily in the United States, she would like to learn English.

Some students have developed job skills in their own countries that they would like to apply here. Hernandes, for example, was a secretary and she would like to learn English so that she can be a bilingual secretary. Cruz is from El Salvador, where he completed about half of a college degree. He has experience as a bank manager, but because of his inability to speak English he has been doing mill and factory work at night while attending ESL in the daytime. He would like to finish his college education here and qualify for better jobs.

Adults whose background does not include English and who are living in North Carolina experience the need to learn English, no matter what their life cycle stage may be. Rosario explains: "For a lot of people that come here from [a] foreign country, [it] is too hard to live in this country if they don't have the way how to understand the environment. I guess that's the most important thing."

Life Cycle Stage

The majority of ABE students are adults whose native language is English and their participation appears to relate directly to the tasks that confront them at this stage in their lives. At the same time, it continues to relate to their prior learning and life experiences and to their prior schooling. For the purposes of this presentation, students have been divided into five age groups (teens; twenties; thirties and early forties; late forties and fifties; and older than sixty) because these appear to correspond to patterns of life cycle stages. It should be understood, however, that age does not always directly correspond to life stages. Some students are struggling with initial parental responsibilities in their late teens and early twenties while others are in their thirties. The analysis focuses on the tasks, rather than the ages. It also is important to remember that the primary goals of all groups basically are the same: improved ability to use reading, writing and computation skills. The life cycle framework provides insight into the decision to participate in an ABE program at this point in an adult's life. It is not meant to oversimplify the complex interaction of factors that leads to enrollment and underlies motivation to maintain the effort of participation.

Teenagers: Mandate or Choice Toward New Adult Roles. The majority of students in the youngest age group, between 16 and 21 years old, appear to be struggling with the transition from childhood to adult roles. As a result, their life goals tend to be vague and the relationship between schooling and the future quite abstract. They have limited work histories and they have not yet developed a philosophy of work. Their prior schooling is recent and exerts a large influence on their perspective about ABE. These students fall into two major groups, differentiated by the degree to which participation has been mandated by an authority such as a judge or a parent. King, for example, explains his participation: "I got into some trouble and the judge told me I had to do it so I come back to school." Sanderson, on the other hand, came "to have something to do," but she contends, "I came because I wanted to ...I didn't ask nobody."

Those young adults whose participation has been mandated often do not appear to have become engaged in the schooling process in ABE any more than they were engaged by the public schools. McGraw, for example, is 18 years old and was expelled from school for suspected drug use. His lawyer suggested he come to the ABE program because it would look better when his case came to court. His goals: "I just want to finish. Get my GED and start working so I can get a better job." What kind of job? "It really don't matter." When King is asked about continuing in the community college, he replies, "I really don't know what I'd really want to take...what I think I might be good at."

Many of the young adults we spoke with are struggling with the same issues in ABE that confront all young adults who are trying to attend school at the same time as they are growing into new adult roles of parent, spouse or sibling caregiver. Juggling these roles is never easy, as Mann explains. She is 20 years old, lives with her boyfriend and works inconsistent hours. Whenever her work slackens she has the time to attend the ABE program. Her boyfriend and his mother are both supportive of her continuing schooling, but she sometimes feels badly about the trade-offs:

> I don't cook when I go to school and work too. Right now, [my boyfriend's] mama cooks supper and if he wants anything to eat he'll git up and cook it hisself. I can't cook, wash dishes, clean house, and work and go to school too. ... I feel guilty because I feel like it's my responsibility to cook and feed him at least and then clean up after him.

Although there are multiple demands on their lives that stretch their energy and resources to the limit, many of these young adults maintain their participation because they believe it will assist them in their personal growth process. It will help them develop their own sense of themselves as adults. Eason is 19 years old, with a young child. Her comments mirror those of many others:

> I just want my GED because I want to go on into some kind of college or something. Not actually college. I want to get a degree in something. I want to be something. You know, I just tired of--I feel like being at home, and I just feel like I'm doing nothing for myself, and I want a career. I ain't got nothing there.... You hear all these other people talking way above your level, and you can't understand what they're talking about. They're using big long fancy words and you don't even know what they mean, and you know, I'm beginning to hang around with people like that and I'm more interested in wanting to be like them, or something.... [Finishing school], it'll help my feeling toward me. It'll help me like myself better. And it'll help me in, you know, going further into school.... I'm a mother, and I'm proud of that, but you know, that's just not enough.... I want my GED.... And I don't want to get it from not knowing nothing.... I want it because I know that I can pass it. I don't want it from guessing. You know, I want to learn.

Some of these young adults have jobs they enjoy; they believe that literacy skills will simply facilitate their work. Mann explains, "Well, it's hard getting along when you can't read things, you know, as fast as other people can and you have to look at something to write something down -- it just gets aggravating.... I like my job, I won't quit it." Most of these young adults, however, tie participation to getting a high school credential and future employment. They often have experienced the difficulty of getting and keeping jobs without high school credentials, and they intend to continue in the GED program when they complete ABE. Some describe specific jobs ("I'm going to try and get on [a local company]. I was laid off because of my diploma"), but most speak in vague generalities: "I figured you need something to help you get a job so I just come up here" (Nichols).

Many of these young adults would like to continue their schooling at their local community colleges. With limited previous opportunities to develop work skills and attitudes, these young adults appear to believe that schooling, by itself, will enable their employment. Decater explains: "Well, I'm going to see if I can find a college to go to or take some kind of training or something that I would like to do, and study for it and then get me a job somewhere-whatever I study to be."

Twenties: Struggling with Competing Demands. Students in their twenties experience even more pressures to respond to competing demands than do their younger colleagues. They often have family and employment responsibilities that leave little energy for schooling. On one hand, family responsibilities motivate many young adults to participate; they hold an image of an ideal parent, spouse or family life and they hope ABE will assist them to grow into those roles and realize those dreams. Kalen, for example, describes: "I am married. I've got two boys, and the reason why I'm here is to get my diploma and also further my education to make a better life, a future for me and my children and my husband."

On the other hand, many of these young adults are tired all the time; their progress in school may be undermined by their inability to find the time to reflect upon their learning and to do homework. The concept of learning inherited from the public schools and the structure of schooling do not support learning while dealing with extensive competing demands. Detre, for example, is 25 years old; she enrolled in the program when she was unable to pass a test for a job promotion. She would like to get her GED and take the test again when another position opens up. She is trying to raise two children, and she finds studying at home very difficult:

> If the kids are up, I sit down and start and they're coming in there, and you know...especially my little one. And I just have to quit. She's trying to take my book away from me, or write on my paper, or something, and [my other daughter is] always asking me questions.... And then I'm ready to go to sleep.

Students in their twenties often have been working in difficult, low-paying and low-status jobs. They believe that more desirable jobs become available with additional education; participation in ABE is seen as part of a longer process of preparing for these jobs. The preparation process usually includes attaining a GED and, often, continuing in a community college curriculum. Miller wants to enter the electronics curriculum in his local college. Bach would like to learn how to manage a beauty salon. Although Giles would like to continue through her GED, "for myself and I want it for my daddy too," she also has a more pragmatic reason for returning to school. She explains: "I was tired of waiting on tables and not getting enough money for the job I was doing." These young adults do not discuss the characteristics and qualities that will facilitate their employment in addition to schooling credentials.

Schooling also is viewed as a means of developing a new self-concept and enhancing the general quality of life. Ingram got hurt on his job and is unable to return to work right now. He knows he will have to be able to get a job that does not involve the physical labor of his prior jobs, and ABE can help him develop the skills he needs. In addition, he comments, "Not only [jobs] but in everyday life, too. Pick up the newspaper, read the Bible, and things like that." Oates learned about the ABE program while he was in prison, and now he would like to get his GED, take a welding course, and lead a constructive life.

Thirties to Mid-Forties: Role Models and Dissonance. ABE students in this sample who are between their early thirties and mid-forties often have been working and raising children for a number of years. For the first time these adults are beginning to see themselves as role models for others, and their participation in ABE can be understood partly in terms of their concepts of positive role models. Many parents in this age group see themselves "setting a good example" for their teenaged children as they try to encourage their children to stay in school and, possibly, to continue in college. They are concerned about their inability to assist their children with school work or to answer their questions. These parents also feel they need to create a home environment that values reading and school attainment. Rustin and her daughter, therefore, do their school work together: "She helps me with my reading, she helps me with my math. You know she helps me with everything I do. But like last night, she got her books, I got my books and we did it together. And if it was something I didn't know she would tell me or if it's something she don't know, I would tell her."

Adults at this stage in their lives also are facing the fact that soon their children will be grown. Children often assist their illiterate parents with bills, mail and other reading tasks; soon the adults will be on their own. For example, Jones depends on her daughter now. She explains, "I want to learn to read. That's my main goal if I learn nuthin' else.... One day [my daughter] will get married and she will leave home. That's not good in that everybody reads your mail. You know, I wants to know these things for myself."

These students appear to have an image of adequate adult functioning in contemporary American society, and their participation is related to the desire to fulfill those expectations. Jones asserts,

> I just want to learn to read to be able to read. Every job you go on, there's an application, you go to the dentist, there's the application. Everywhere you go, you fill out an application. And I feel so ashamed, you know. I go in the dentist's office and can't sign the application. I go for a job, I can't fill out an application.... Well, you know, it doesn't matter if I never get a really good job.... I just want to be able to pick up a paper that I can read for myself.... It don't make me no difference what kind of job I get, but it's the point that it could be a paper where it's saying 'danger' you know.

Royster, similarly, is interested in "normal" adult functioning and being a positive role model for his son:

> If somebody hands me something [then] I can read it and I can take it the way I want to. And I can say, 'Well, I don't think that's funny.' And then I can explain the facts later. Or I can read an article about something and I can tell them about if I disagree with it or I agree with it and I can tell them why because I was able to read it.

And, finally, "I just want to show my son that you do need your education."

The Bible and the newspaper, integrally connected to adult personal and community roles, are most often identified as the materials these adults would like to learn how to read. Rains, for instance, explains, "It would tickle me to read a newspaper and don't have nobody in the room, I could read it. Or if somebody in the room I, could read it and know I was saying the right words, and saying it properly.... I'm not here for the number of books - I'm not here for the grades.... I want to know it all." Jones would like to go to Sunday School, but says, "I won't go to Sunday School because I can't read, and in the Sunday School they call on you to read.... The peoples who can't read, you know, look through the Bible, or pretend you read."

Many adults in this group are unwilling to commit themselves to long range goals. "You never know what will happen," is often heard. "If this goes well, who knows what I might do next?" These adults, similar to other adults who see their fifties approaching, are becoming aware that life is finite and they feel they must choose their commitments carefully. Brookes, for example, explains:

> I really just wanted to learn how to read, and write too.... If I can pick it up real fast, I'd like to have [the GED], but I really don't want to spend the rest of my life here. It's hard when you get up in your thirties or forties. I guess it's hard to go back to school and it seems like it's slower learning then than when you're young. And when you're working too, every day, and come, your eyes gets tired, back's sore, all this stuff.

Arrington continues, "I've got a satisfied life. I've got all the material goods that I need to make it. So I really ain't got no goal for nothing like that. And I got a good job.... So far as needing a high school education, I really don't need it."

Many of the adults in this group participate for intrinsic rewards rather than for a specific economic rationale. Gentel, for example, was a migrant farm worker who received very little public schooling. A counselor helped her leave the migrant stream, get a job and enroll in the local ABE program. Gentel has "always wanted to read;" her husband and children help her manage her family, job and school responsibilities so that she can attend the program. She explains, "I love my job... but just sometime I guess I just feel like I want to do something else. ...I was thinking I could even take up sewing at night or learning how to sew real good. Or learning how to be a real good cook. But just something else." Clement explains that his decision to learn how to read is "for my advantage and not anybody else's." He feels he will be successful when he is "able to read whatever I want to read or add whatever I want to add." Knott adds, "It's always bothered me because I didn't finish school and that's one of the main things that I wanted to do.... I just wanted to prove that I could do it, mainly to myself."

Self-satisfaction particularly emerges as the motivation for those adults whose lives have been quite different from that of the stereotypical poor, unemployed illiterate person. Although they value the instrumental uses of new skills or credentials, at this point in their lives they are tired of the dissonance between how they feel they are viewed by others and how they view themselves. Pandel, for example, has been successful as a supervisor and superintendent; "I could go through the rest of my life without ever getting a GED or anything and become in the mid-thirty thousand a year income bracket," he explains. However, Pandel has been "passing" as a college graduate in the business world and he is "tired of faking life." He would like to get a GED so he can pursue some leisure interests, such as pilot's training, but his major motivation is "the satisfaction of saying well, I've finally done it."

Like other adult learners, these students are juggling jobs, families, school and other commitments. Their prior experience with school has taught them to expect some conflict and difficulty. Goodleigh, for example, is a 30 year old woman with a family and a job. She describes her routine:

> I work all day, by the time I get off of work, it's something to five, I got to go home and prepare dinner for my family. O.K., so I get through with that and get my kitchen cleaned up and... then... I'm going to have to leave my dishes and come on over here...there's just not time.... So, by the time I get home, I have no time to spend with my family or to do some things I had to do that day because I left the house at seven thirty that morning going to work and not getting home until late.

Goodleigh has returned to school because,

> I felt like I needed to know more and I wanted my GED - I want it real bad. I may never work on the job where I may have to have it, but for my own personal being I felt better with myself if I could have it. You know, I set a goal to get it and I'm going to get it.... When I get my GED I plan to take -- I imagine they have other things here at the college that you can advance yourself to and give you opportunity, and I'll be ready for it.

It is important to note that students like Goodleigh and Gentel describe continuing lifelong learning goals, but their prior experience with schooling encourages them to think in terms of credentials or specific courses rather than lifelong learning. They are struggling to negotiate the demands of schooling while maintaining some semblance of adult life until the schooling is "over," rather than reorienting their lives to integrate some notion of continuing learning and development. Goodleigh continues:

> You know, your mind can only do so much until you get wrapped up in so many things at home and at school too.. ..you know, you can get so much on your mind until you get totally exhausted sometimes.... But you are not going to do this forever so it's only going to last for a while until you finally get to where you are going.

Young adults are trying to equip themselves for their first jobs; adults in their thirties and forties often have been working at unskilled or semiskilled labor for the past fifteen or twenty years and they are weary. They hope that reading skills and, perhaps, a GED, will open new employment opportunities. Maber, for example, explains, "I figured I was getting to the age I can't be putting groceries on shelves the rest of my life and I want to try to get a job that I can more or less look for a future to have something." Flowers has been washing dishes; he would like a job that could really support a family. Rains has been working in construction; he feels it is time to, "Let somebody [else] hold the shovel and rake now, you know. Just give me a break."

These adults differ from those younger than themselves, however, because they have developed a philosophy of work and they understand that a credential or functional literacy skills alone will not insure promotion or better jobs. Rose, for example, explains,

> I've had opportunities to be a lead man at work and I've tried it and the only problem that I had, as far as getting the work done and it's no problem, they like my work but I had problems with the papers.... When I learn how to spell and be able to put things on paper, then I would accept it.

Shilling has been in his pay grade for the past five years and is in line for the next superintendent job that opens. He has the job skills but lacks the requisite high school degree, so he is hoping to move from the ABE to the GED program. "I'm just at a standstill," Shilling explains. "I need this so I can advance." Royster would like a new career working with other Vietnam veterans. He understands that, "I had to learn how to talk to people and how to get along" in addition to learning how to read.

Brookes has been economically successful; right now he deals with the reading and writing demands of his job because he "knows it mostly by heart." Brookes decided to learn how to read because, "I'm the second man down the totem pole where I'm at, and if anything happens to the other guy, they'd want me to take his place, I guess. So I need to read and write real good if I want to take his place." This promotion would not require a high school degree, and his goals do not necessarily include attaining the GED; "I'd really rather, where I'm at now, I'd rather read and write as have the GED." He believes his existing job competence, together with improved literacy, will meet his needs.

Mid-Forties and Fifties: Reflection and Realizing Old Dreams. Adults in this sample who are in their late forties and fifties often speak about the need for continued education and reading and writing skills as a response to a social world that has changed considerably from the world of their youth when they left school. For instance, Stevens, 53 years old, explains:

> I do want to better myself not for job reasons but to be able to cope with today's society. ...Twenty years ago or thirty years ago, I never thought today would come, really. I figured when I dropped out of school that I had enough to take me through life but, you know, each day or each year it gets worse and worse and worse and so my mind is made up. My intentions are to maybe be in school maybe the rest of my life.

Many of these adults have been involved in civic and religious organizations for a number of years; they would like to feel comfortable in leadership positions at this point in their lives. Stevens has held offices, but felt that his effectiveness was undermined by his inability to read well. Now he reflects that he will feel successful in ABE. "If I don't learn but one thing- that's learning to reading the Bible for my Sunday School lesson. If I can read that then I can go from there."

Poor and illiterate adults often are stereotyped as not valuing education and being unmotivated to participate. The adults we spoke with in this study, however, appear to share many of the common beliefs about the value and power of education. Malone, for example, would like to get his GED because, "with a high school diploma things would happen. I wouldn't have to worry about my family. If I lost the job I've got, I could get another job. I could really support my family." It is interesting to note the extent to which this is similar to the perspective of the youngest group. Malone believes that in many ways it is those who are educated who do not really understand the value of education: "I came here to try to learn how to read. A person don't know how really important that is if he can do it." With additional education and his existing job skills, Malone plans, "Next time I get the chance of a better job at the plant, I'm going to take it."

Many of the adults in this group are confronting new tasks and taking on new roles. At this point in their lives, they see their helpers leaving as children grow older and marriages break up or spouses die. Their valuing of education is clear in the ways they plan for the future. Pittman, for example, is 45 years old; she left school because she was pregnant and has been raising her family since then. Her husband never wanted her to work. Now she is divorced and her children are grown and she is facing the employment market without experience or schooling. She knows, "it's going to be very difficult for me to go on the job market without anything to present myself with." Pittman describes herself: "I'm a family person- I'm a mother- first of all. But now that they are all grown, I'm nobody's mother anymore.... Now I want to be an individual and [education] brings out me, myself, as an individual, pulls my personality out." When a recruiter from the local ABE program assured her she was not too old to return to school, "that did the trick. I say, well, I'll go because I've always wanted to go back to school.... You do what you have to do until a better time come and this is my opportunity and I'm on the bandwagon -- I grabbed it."

In today's society adults in their fifties can still look to the future for new roles. Returning to school is seen as a time of new beginnings, not necessarily because the past has been a time of "failure," but because circumstances and responsibilities have changed, allowing new alternatives to arise. Reflecting on the dreams remaining from earlier times, many adults decide to return to school to equip themselves for new roles or simply to fulfill old wishes. Those who have been working are concerned about future security; those entering the workplace for the first time see education as a key for employability. They recognize, however, that it will take personal qualities combined with education to secure new jobs. For instance, Pittman continues:

> I want to get my high school diploma.... I expect to go on to college and further my education. And after that I expect to get a job and go to work and make my way in life because as it stands, I need some money and I can't get money sitting around. My family is gone and the few that's left- they'll soon be gone, and I need an income.

Stafford is 58 years old now, and following open heart surgery feels she has many possibilities ahead. From ABE she says,

> I would like to go back to school- even to college now.... I think I would like to finish... and get my GED and I would like to go on and take at least a couple of years of college.... One thing I know I would take is pertaining to computers.... I like the computers. I like the programs. I don't always understand everything but I try.

Buckner works in housekeeping at a local hospital and came to the ABE program when she was unable to complete a test for another job. Her primary goal is simply, "I'd like to read -- just read, like you were reading to your child at night." In addition, Buckner hopes that ABE is just the beginning of a new era for her life: "If I can get my GED that would be just wonderful.... I believe I would go to college... any program that I can get into at college- technical training to help me to better myself."

Abernathy also feels that there is a new set of opportunities ahead. She is 53 years old and left school when she was 13. She explains,

> I had it in the back of my head for years that I wanted to go to school... and finish up because I've raised six children and doing it the hard way pushing a sewing machine or waitress work, whatever you can get, and its not easy.... I've just always regretted not getting my education when I was younger.

Most of her children are grown and she was in-between jobs and decided, with the support of her husband, to return to school. She has been able to help her youngest son with his schoolwork, and now sees a new kind of future for herself. She has progressed through the ABE program and received her GED. Now she intends to go further: "I'm not done yet. ...I know there are so many things out there. I'm just not sure yet what I could get into but I'm going to start looking."

Going back to school also fulfills needs to continue as a positive role model. Capps has been a mother and housewife all of her life. Now her children are grown and she is alone in the house, which "gets boring." Although she would like to work, there are very few jobs in the area. Capps thinks that learning to read and write would help her get a job, but her participation is motivated by the desire to read, particularly to read the Bible. Capps has recruited her son, her daughter-in-law and her daughter into the ABE program with her. They help each other with homework and generally support each other's commitment to learning.

The physical demands of maintaining multiple roles become more difficult to deal with as adults get older. Abernathy appreciates her husband's support, particularly when they are both working: "We both did the housework, and we both shared the cooking and the cleaning; he's one of those jewels-the special ones that you don't find often." Carradine is divorced and finds the combination of working, schooling and taking care of his home exhausting:

> I'm trying to get far enough where I think maybe that I can spell, you know, and do about half way like I want to.... I'll probably quit then because I tell you I get mighty tired. See, I live something like 13 miles from here and I drive up here and back, you know.... And I just get all tied up sometimes and just say, well, I ain't going to school- I'm going to rest.

Adults continue to believe that they are responsible for struggling with these competing pressures rather than expecting the schooling system to respond to their hardships.

Sixty and Older: Lifelong Learners. Retirement always is a difficult time of transitions and change. ABE students who are in their sixties or older have been working for many, many years. They have been learning on their jobs and in their homes and communities; retirement is their chance to fulfill lifelong dreams of returning to school. Children are grown and on their own, schedules are more flexible and these adults are used to being active. Motivation is often the intrinsic reward of continuing to learn; after all these years, they would like the self-satisfaction of learning to read or attaining a high school diploma. They overcome difficult obstacles to participate. These adults cannot walk very far and do not have the resources to pay for taxis. In addition, aging causes some physical problems for participation such as degenerating eyesight and arthritic hands that do not learn to write easily.

Some students look forward to functional applications of new literacy skills; they would like to be able to accomplish everyday tasks such as paying bills and reading the newspaper, the Bible and the mail. Helpers often have died or moved away, reinforcing the desire to learn to read. Jackson, for example, is 69 years old. His wife died a few years ago and now he lives by himself. The local Council on Aging sends a bus at 8:00 in the morning to take him to class, and his mornings are rushed as he prepares to leave the house in the morning:

> I can get up at six, or quarter until six and cook, and wash the dishes, make the bed up and get ready and some people think you ought to do that there by seven, but you got it all by yourself, nobody to help you what-so-ever. And, you ain't got no time to kill. You can't stand and kindly study it a little bit.

Although Jackson feels that people today are "living too fast," he continues with his studies because, without his wife to help him, he now is dependent on others for letters and bills. He would like to be able to do those tasks on his own, as he explains: "If I could just pick up a newspaper, pick up something or another and write letter, and I tend to my own business. I wouldn't have to say that I've got a letter, and I want you to read it to me to see what it says, and you could write me a letter."

For some, retirement is a time to travel, to visit grown children and to see a little bit more of the country. Participation in ABE is fit around other retirement activities. Petersen "just wanted to see what I did miss," and attends the program whenever possible. She travels with her retired husband often, but maintains a commitment to getting her GED for personal satisfaction. Kearns moved to North Carolina with her retired husband. He has many leisure pursuits, but she has enrolled in the ABE program, seeing it as "something constructive" for herself. She always felt she "missed something" and would like to get her GED. She does not think that getting a high school diploma should necessarily be tied to employment, as she explains: "It's just for self satisfaction. I'm sure it is because I don't feel that I will ever return to work. I don't think it matters whether you're going back to work or not in order to have [the GED]."

In this age group both husband and wife are likely to be retired and may attend the ABE program together, sharing the struggle of returning to school after as much as fifty or sixty years in the work force. The Tysons see ABE as helping them develop wider social relationships, as Mr. Tyson describes, "Now that I'm retired now I like to have more education. I like to go out and to meet different people. And if you don't know how to talk with people, they won't have nuthin' to do with you." Couples often talk about the importance of attending the program together, regardless of any instrumental benefits they might reap.

SUMMARY

Adults participating in Adult Basic Education in North Carolina have a wide range of characteristics; this chapter attempts to portray some of the patterns in this diversity. ABE students' prior experiences with public schooling were alienating and generally unrewarding, although the circumstances vary according to the era in which adults attended school. ABE students found public school irrelevant to their lives and interests, inflexible and unsupportive of their need to respond to family pressures, and painful due to personal social and cultural differences from the norm. As the age of students in this sample increases, there is a higher likelihood that they left school in earlier grades and at younger ages.

Initial employment is most strongly related to ABE participation by the youngest groups of students; job promotion and mobility are important for students in the middle age ranges, and employment becomes irrelevant for the oldest students. Movement from the ABE to the GED program is important for students of all ages, although the underlying motivation changes from its relationship to employment for those who are younger to self-satisfaction for older students. Adults with work histories and philosophies of work place additional schooling in relation to their existing skills when talking about future job mobility and learning. Younger adults without this perspective tend to tie future employment possibilities more strongly to schooling, displaying an attitude of dependence on schooling credentials for attaining jobs.

The adults in this sample want to learn how to read, write and compute. They would like to apply these skills to a wide range of contexts, and these application contexts change throughout the life cycle. There is a young group of ABE students whose attendance has been mandated and who do not appear to have fully engaged in the program. However, most ABE students are participating on the basis of their analysis of their present situation, their position in their life cycles, their prior schooling experiences and their knowledge of themselves as learners. Adults come to the ABE program with some highly developed learning strategies, most of which have the potential to assist their participation.

Some of the conventional wisdom of the field of ABE is questioned by the data and analysis presented in this chapter. The effectiveness of North Carolina's ABE programs will be judged partly on the basis of the extent to which characteristics of ABE students identified in this study are incorporated into instruction and their existing skills and perspectives respected.

CHAPTER 5: ABE INSTRUCTORS

The relationship between instructors and students is central to assessing the effectiveness of North Carolina's ABE program. This relationship is quite complex, and must be understood partly in terms of the instructors' assumptions, beliefs, values, and perspectives on ABE and ABE students as well as through reference to instructors' actual skills and knowledge of the field. This chapter includes instructors' descriptions of their initial involvement in ABE; then their professional preparation for working in adult basic education is analyzed, since this plays a large role in the skills, attitudes, and beliefs instructors bring to their positions. This preparation includes formal schooling, learning on the job, and continuing professional development such as inservice training or supplemental formal coursework. In addition, instructors' perspectives on the characteristics of ABE students and the purposes of ABE programs are explored.

Whenever broad patterns are portrayed some of the individual distinctions are lost. Research that simply catalogs discrete phenomena is of limited usefulness for understanding the larger picture, however. The patterns presented here certainly direct attention to generalizations and in that process may oversimplify instructors' perspectives about their roles, responsibilities, programs and students. It is important to note, however, that these patterns are consistent with those presented in other research on ABE programs in the United States and with the bulk of the literature in the field.

GETTING INVOLVED IN ABE

Most instructors became involved in adult basic education through personal friendships with ABE personnel or by responding to instructor recruitment announcements in local newspapers. A much smaller number of instructors became involved through volunteering; many used volunteering as a way of getting to know a new community. Instructors usually knew very little about the ABE program when they initially applied for their positions, but they assumed they could rely on their prior training and experience which often was in elementary and secondary education. Most instructors were provided little or no orientation or training prior to assuming their instructional responsibilities.

Almost all ABE instructors are employed part-time (less than forty hours per week) and many are attracted to ABE because they are seeking only part-time employment; they often are not employed in other jobs. The majority of instructors are women, and many left full-time employment to raise their young children. Their family commitments limit the time they want to devote to paid employment. Goodman, for example, had quit her full-time elementary education position when she began having children. She remembers,

> I think I was looking for some part-time work because I was

> home and after two years I was going a little buggy.... Someone ...said, 'You know, you should call... and put your name down for ABE classroom teaching,' and I did it. I filled out an application, and I didn't hear from her for a long time.... Then, out of the clear blue, ...I remember, I was canning applesauce and [the ABE director] called and said 'Would you like to do a class?' She said, 'I need you tonight.' And I was just all flustered, and I said, 'Yeah, Yeah I'd like to,' and zoom, I went.... I was really thrown into it quickly. I had no idea what ABE was.

She continues, "It was awful. [One instructor] just showed me how to fill out the roll cards and [the director] had me sign contracts." Hoyt also was looking for something "to get me out of the house." She explains, "It had been like five years between the kids and I thought, well, I wanted to get back into teaching but not full time, so the hours were ideal, nine to twelve."

Mitchell's background is in social work rather than education. She recalls,

> When I went to apply for the job, I did not really know as much about the ABE program as I know now. I knew it was a part-time teaching situation and I had a baby at the time and I thought, 'Oh, that's great.' I just showed my work experience and they said, 'Oh, you've been a social worker, you'll be very good to do this.' And then they asked me a little bit about what type of social work and that type of thing. And then I just came on into the classroom.

Another group of instructors became involved because they were seeking a part-time job in addition to their regular full-time employment. Mills is an assistant principal who had just finished her Master's degree and was "looking for some extra duties." Her principal had been teaching ABE for five years and encouraged her to look into it. She says, "I was hired and just fell in love with it." Schall was trying to meet personal needs that were not being met in her secondary level teaching job: "[ABE] wasn't rigid. You could really tune in to the personal needs and that's more fun to me than to say, 'This is what we have to do today, we'll do it for better or for worse,' you know. It was just more personalized. I enjoyed it more than the rigid classroom." Schall continues to teach in the public schools but says that ABE provides "an outlet for the fun of teaching." Tickle has a history of commitment to community work in addition to her full-time job in elementary education: "I have done parks and recreation work. I have worked in community centers and... I worked in tutorial services for a [local] church here in the city.... I have always done those kinds of things along with whatever teaching experience I have had."

Toler also works in ABE in addition to her full-time teaching job. She explains, "The money, I don't even keep. I send it to my brother. I have a brother that's laid off in Pittsburgh, from the steel mills, I send him my night time job. So I'm doing this out of love. ...And really, you know, you love your students. You love to see them learn and get ahead." Todd's personal reasons are close to home: "I had quite a bit of illiteracy in my family and I had bettered myself and I wanted to see them better themselves so I thought if I had taken on the mission of coming into Adult Basic Education that I could reach and help some of my relatives as well as the adults living in the [local] area."

Some instructors are involved in a protracted search for full-time work. In these cases part-time work in ABE may be temporary as the search for full-time work continues. Scoggins began teaching in ABE when she could not find a public school position, but left when one became available; she was concerned about salary and benefits. She feels, "I would love to have stayed. I enjoyed that. But it was only a part-time position." McGee has a degree in recreation but was doing janitorial work at a local daycare center. He recalls,

> I was up at the center and I was cleaning up and the [ABE] director came by and he was looking for a site that he could hold the classes in. I told him that I was a teacher but I couldn't get into that area and... he just started talking to me about the program. I told him I thought it was pretty good and I'd like to get more information and he said that they needed teachers. I said, 'I think I might like it,' so... he came back by and he gave me an application and I filled it out....A couple of days after that he came back and asked me when I could start and we set a date.... They just said, 'You're going to start here,' and I said, 'Oh, my goodness!' Anxiety -- butterflies! I was real nervous.

McGee found another part-time position and continues to work two jobs rather than leave ABE.

It is particularly notable that these instructors appear to accept that specific professional preparation for ABE is not necessary and that being "thrown into" an ABE classroom is a normal way of operating. The standards used to assess the quality of teachers hired for the public schooling system appear to be suspended in the case of ABE -- by the instructors themselves. Many view ABE teaching simply as a part-time job in which they can help people rather than as a professional position with the attendant professional responsibilities and required qualifications.

PROFESSIONAL PREPARATION FOR ABE

Schooling

Public school teaching often is a professional goal for children as they are growing up; undergraduate curricula prepare young adults for teaching in the public school system and socialize them into certain ways of thinking about their work as well as providing a background of skills and knowledge. Adult education, on the other hand, is a profession usually entered through the "back door;" there are no preparatory programs at the undergraduate level and no state-enforced certification and training requirements. Therefore, adults who become adult basic education instructors bring a wide range of backgrounds and training to their positions.

The instructors we spoke with ranged from new (less than six months experience) to seasoned veterans (more than ten years experience), as well as former instructors. In all cases except two they have bachelor's degrees and nine hold Master's degrees. The two who do not have bachelor's degrees hold Associate degrees in recreation and daycare from local community colleges. The majority of the instructors we spoke with hold undergraduate college degrees in early childhood, elementary, middle schools or secondary education. Their areas of specialization include history, social studies, driver education, physical education, mathematics, music, english, psychology, and special education. Other undergraduate degrees are in horticulture, social work, Italian, classics and home economics. One instructor has a Master's degree in Adult Education and one is working on a doctorate in Adult Education. Three instructors have taken some Master's coursework in elementary reading education for their own professional development.

Even though statistics for the entire system are consistent with the our sample's high percentage of college degrees, we found a good deal of controversy around the issue of instructors' educational attainment level. Many instructors believe that "attitude" is more important than formal education. Mitchell asserts: "The academic material that we teach is so reasonable, anybody that has good communication skills with other people can teach it. There's just a matter of do you have the interest and that sort of thing."

Some instructors believe that a college education degree is necessary for providing some "experience" teaching (not necessarily with adults), although many assert that volunteering can provide equivalent background. Crowder believes that instructors should have at least two years of college because, "in high school you are more dependent and once you get in college you come on an independent level.... In college you're expected to find out, you know, to fulfill different expectations." A few instructors mentioned the importance of knowing how to teach, although they often reflect a limited understanding of what that means. Crockett, for instance, says that an instructor "should know the teaching method," as if there were not a range of alternatives. Wren studied reading education in graduate school but still found himself learning on the job in ABE: "You can sit there in a classroom and study it, but until you actually go out and apply it, it's almost two different things."

Learning on the Job

Since instructors have such diverse backgrounds and a notable absence of specific adult education preparation, the resources available through the ABE program are central for assisting them in adapting their existing skills and knowledge. The state requires a minimum of ten hours per year of inservice training for instructors, but the quality and content of this training varies enormously across the state. According to the instructors, most workshops consist of explanations of administrative details that instructors must handle, such as attendance forms and initial student test reporting. At other times workshops appear to be social occasions, primarily, during which there is an unstructured informal sharing of experiences and ideas. It is clear that the ABE program may supplement prior schooling, but it does not appear to provide any coherent program of skill and knowledge development other than the Laubach training program in some parts of the state.

As an alternative to formal schooling and in-service training, some instructors have identified other, more experienced instructors in their institutions who can provide some assistance and support. Requests for help usually are not placed within some larger framework of professional development but rather are seen as an informal kind of socializing among colleagues. Instructors go to other instructors most often for information about new materials, as Witt describes, "Occasionally I will go in [another instructor's] class and see what she's doing and what material she's using and we can share our materials.... Most of the time I'm just curious." Wren sometimes visits with two other instructors for, "Not so much sharing ideas, but who was still in class, more of a social-type thing." Mitchell, however, quickly identified two experienced instructors and, "I realized immediately how effective they were with the students and I modeled myself after their teaching methods."

Professional Development

Instructors do not appear to feel a personal responsibility for upgrading their knowledge of the professional field of adult basic education. Indeed, usually they do not appear to be aware that there is a larger professional field with journals, professional associations and ongoing research. This seems to stem partly from a belief that specific knowledge about adult education is unnecessary for successful instruction. ABE is not viewed as an opportunity for continuing professional learning, growth and development but rather as an opportunity to help someone else, using human qualities -- compassion, caring, sensitivity -- rather than learned and developed skills and knowledge. As Robinson says, "Of course, it's important to always have expertise on subject matter that you're working with, but that's secondary to this attitude and approach." Moss claims, "A super ESL teacher is not one that's necessarily trained as an ESL person. It's the enthusiasm to impart the knowledge and the willingness to give what they know to a student and the patience to give it. So, our teachers are not all ESL trained; they are all diversified occupations." In fact, most instructors respond to questions about their own motivation for working in ABE with phrases like, "I just like helping people." Goodman is unusual when she says, "I love to teach reading. I love to get a non-reader and start and just work up. That's a real incentive for me."

In addition, almost all instructors are part-time and many do not have other full time jobs. This creates a dis-incentive for engaging in professional development. Conference fees, course tuition and other costs would have to paid by the instructor, rather than the institution, in most cases. East, an ESL instructor, is unusual for her membership in local and national professional organizations. Most instructors comment that job insecurity from one quarter to the next undermine their motivation to enroll in relevant courses at local universities.

Clearly, instructors bring most of their training with them. In other fields of education, this is expected and normal -- university teacher training programs and schools of education exist to provide a corps of trained educators for the public schooling system. This training has not specifically prepared instructors for adult basic education, however. Since so little training is provided on the job, ABE personnel appear to assume that there will be only minor differences between the skills and knowledge necessary for teaching adults and that taught in preparation for teaching children. The consequences of this assumption are reflected in many of the problems facing adult basic education instructors that are explicated in the rest of this report.

This portrait of ABE instructors in North Carolina is slightly different from the picture of ABE instructors nationally who more often are full time elementary and secondary education teachers. The predominance of elementary and secondary education training among North Carolina's ABE instructors, however, raises questions about the extent to which these instructors may differ in truly meaningful ways from their counterparts in other states.

PERSPECTIVES ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF STUDENTS

Motivation, Determination and Talents

Instructors always begin discussing their students by stressing the diversity and the uniqueness of each individual. Nonetheless, they proceed to describe certain patterns and generalizations based upon their experience. Some instructors differentiate among students according to the students' ages. Mitchell, for example, explains that, "My most intense students -- the ones that are the most involved with the education part of the experience -- are my students over 50." And she continues, "I think the least motivated ABE student is the teenager that has been rejected from the public school situation.... ABE for that teenager is a real social experience just like school is for any of us at that age.... Occasionally we'll have a young adult that is a very serious student but that's really the exception."

Cleary's experience is similar:

> The middle aged people are more determined and they know- they've been out of school and 'This is what I really want to do.' The sixteen and seventeen year olds are pretty unsure about everything and especially the males- the females,...they are more mature at sixteen. The males want to go out and race around in their hot cars and you might not see them for a week, so I have more success with the females in that age group than I do the males. Now when the male gets to be about nineteen or twenty and he finds out he's got to do this to keep a job, then I'll see him come in a couple of years later. I've seen that trend- I recognize them when they come back

> through the door.

Cleary differentiates students' goals according to their place in their life cycle. For older students, "the number one goal is self-satisfaction." Cleary continues: "The people I get who are in their thirties pretty well have their life settled and in order. They might be experiencing some mild discomforts but for the most part they aren't experiencing what these younger kids are going through, thinking about what am I gonna do with my life." The employment goals of the younger students are problematic, however. "So many of them do want to live in this area and there's no jobs here.... There's nothing for them to do but work at Hardee's or McDonald's, so I do encourage them to do the career counselling at the school and to think about going on to college."

Motivation is identified consistently as a positive characteristic of students in adult basic education. The instructors appear to agree that ABE students who are in their thirties or older "are people who didn't have the opportunity as children or adolescents to learn and now that they have gotten older and out into the world they see that this is very important" (Clark). As a result, Clark continues, "Teaching adults is a delight because the adults are motivated." Alston describes students as "eager to learn." She continues: "They didn't want their time wasted; they wanted something that could immediately be put to use. They didn't mind working for it but they wanted to feel like it was worthwhile when they finished it." The only exception, other than the teenagers referred to above, are students who are being paid to enroll in ABE; Barker attests: "I've had lots of problems dealing with that."

Many instructors attempt to describe students in terms broader than simply their ability or inability to read and write. Toler tries to emphasize the skills that her students possess:

> I'm teaching young adults. They're fine people. Everyone in my classroom has a talent right now. The one girl fixes hair. [Another], she could sew anything; she could make anything you want made. The other lady, the Korean girl, excellent cook. She could open up a restaurant. They all have their own talents. Maybe they can't spell or read, but they have a talent there.

Histories of Failure and Poor Self-concept

Descriptions of students provide insight into the underlying assumptions and beliefs that guide the decisions and actions of instructors. A close examination of these descriptions yields a complex image. On the one hand, students are described as "motivated," "talented," "determined," "street-wise," and "goal-oriented." Students are described as participating in the face of adversity and sacrifice. However, equally consistent are descriptions of students who are insecure about their ability to succeed with academic work, have a "terrible self-concept," and see themselves as failures, generally. Mitchell echoes the analysis of many instructors when she says, "[Students are] afraid they might not succeed again as a student- they might be too old or too ignorant to catch on." ABE students are described as, "people who have felt defeated and realized in later life that they needed to go back and be successful" (Scoggins). They are seen as adults who have been "beaten down and beaten down and beaten down" (Barrett). The fact that ABE students did not learn to read and write while in public school is generalized to a picture of adults who think of themselves as overall failures.

Often it is difficult for literate, educated adults to understand and accept that it is possible to have a full, rich -- and financially sound -- life without being able to read and write. Certainly it is easier for someone who is literate; there are far fewer options available for illiterate adults. However, almost all instructors appear to assume that the motivation they attribute to ABE students is the result of students' desire to break a cycle of repeated failures throughout life, rather than related to a sincere desire to build new skills upon a foundation already developed through positive work and family experiences. Creech's perspective is typical:

> The adults are much more motivated because they have already learned that they have messed their lives up so badly, ...they realize the importance of having to learn how to read. Young people don't seem to understand that if they don't know how to read, they are not going to know how to do anything in their life and they will never get a good job.

The tone of the theme of repeated failure and inability reflects an apparent underlying condescension towards students -- an inability to take students seriously as adults, despite their age. This can be seen clearly in the ways that many instructors describe their work; often it is not clear that students are adults. Cozart, for example, appears to be describing work with young children: "They need special attention. They get very upset if they need your attention and you are busy -- very, very upset. It's very difficult to explain to them that I can't do it right now because I'm helping someone else. So you are constantly moving, if you are doing a good job." And it is not clear that Schall really sees herself as working with adults when she says, "I just feel like they're little lost sheep and they've just got to have all the help they can get."

But the most prevailing way in which condescending attitudes toward students is expressed is through the decision made by many instructors -- not all, but many -- not to be honest with students about their skill levels and the nature of the program in which they are enrolled. Data were presented in the preceding chapter that suggest that most students have some perspective on their abilities; they know when they are unable to read and they identify specific literacy-related tasks they would like to be able to do. Students also differentiate between their general learning abilities and their inability to read or write. However, many instructors feel that students will be discouraged by the news that they have scored low on the initial diagnostic tests. Merritt, for example, tells her students that they are in the "high school" program. She explains, "I think men especially, especially some of my night students, if I told them they were really on an elementary school level, it would just -- I think they'd quit. They wouldn't come back." When some students find out that the program is called adult basic education, she claims that they react well, "as long as they never question exactly what Adult Basic Education is or what the terms mean."

Of course, explaining skill strengths and weaknesses in terms of elementary school grade levels could be difficult for anyone to bear; such depictions do not realistically portray the students' abilities. However, when Merritt tried telling some of her students their reading scores she found, "They accept that quite well.... These students really adjust to it beautifully, and they measure their reading level, they keep track of how they're coming up, how they're progressing." The tone of "adjustment" implies an assumption that these adults are psychologically unprepared for the news that they are unable to read well -- an assumption not supported by our interviews with students.

The Missing Cultural Perspective

The instructors' descriptions of ABE students imply a lack of understanding of the cultural and social structural aspects of literacy and schooling. Often instructors do not come from backgrounds similar to those of their students. They may have grown up in the same part of the state but there are socioeconomic and class differences. Instructors seem to lack a perspective on the implications of cultural differences, and seem to assume that illiterate adults are just like literate adults -- except for the fact that they are unable to read and write. Since reading and writing is so central to the lives of literate, schooled adults, and particularly to the lives of educators, it is easy to see how illiterate adults are seen as unable to cope, as failures, as "little lost sheep." While some percentage of the adults who enroll in these ABE programs indeed may be marginally coping with their lives, it probably is not illiteracy that is the underlying cause but rather deeper socioeconomic, psychological and emotional problems.

Research shows that many illiterate adults are members of oral subcultures in which reading and writing play tangential roles. Adults form close-knit social networks in which skills and knowledge are exchanged; every network contains a reader who exchanges this skill for those of the nonliterate network members. Direct personal experience and face-to-face contact are the primary modes of learning and legitimizing knowledge; common sense, rather than the logical deductive reasoning of the schooled dominant group of our society, is the prevailing mode of problem solving. Therefore, when an instructor says that ABE students are unable to "unravel" the simplest problems, for example, she is judging their problem solving ability on the basis of culturally-related criteria. When Tickle states that ABE students are "ignorant" because they have not used standard media channels to identify information about resources, she also is portraying her lack of understanding of the cultural characteristics of nonliterate adults.

Instructors' analyses of students focuses on psychological characteristics rather than structural inequalities, but some instructors are grappling with an emerging understanding that there are structural barriers to success that many adults must overcome. Tickle, for example, began by saying that instructors must learn to "shed that self-righteous attitude" and she continues, "I grew up in a small town in North Carolina and I went to a small university in North Carolina and I have had a very sheltered life and very middle to upper middle-class existence. And I was taught Protestant ethics that you work hard and you get ahead -- and that ain't necessarily so."

The instructors' images of ABE students as failures who are trying to start anew seem to disregard the prior successes and pre-existing strengths many students identify about themselves. Positive characteristics instructors identify, such as determination and commitment, are seen in the framework of students' enrollment in ABE rather than within any broader perspective concerning students as adults. Students job skills and philosophies of work play little if any role in instructors' characterizations of students. In fact, instructors appear to judge students in terms of their apparent lack of success with prior schooling, predominantly. This necessarily leads to development of a negative stereotype about ABE students, since they probably would not be enrolled in ABE had they found public school to be a rewarding environment.

Instructors' perspective on ABE students appears to reflect the extent to which their professional preparation primarily has related to public school teaching. It also reflects assumptions and beliefs prevalent in the larger field of adult basic education. In addition, viewing students primarily as vulnerable, childlike persons reinforces instructors' notions that they need to bring to their positions caring and nurturing attitudes, rather than up-to-date professional skills and knowledge.

PERCEPTIONS OF PURPOSES OF ABE

Instructors can be expected to orient their teaching to their understanding of the purposes of the ABE program. Nationally, the purpose of ABE is to enhance employment, general quality of life and citizenship. According to the administrators at the state level in North Carolina, the program is to meet the academic needs of adults from 16 years of age who have not completed school and want to improve their ability to read, write, compute, listen and speak. Historically these simple statements have been translated into two major types of purposes for local ABE programs: to teach academic skills in ways that are oriented to "mainstreaming" individuals into the dominant, middle-class society or to teach skills within a larger context of collaborative problem solving as programs work with communities to change the structural circumstances that support poverty and illiteracy. The first may be called an "individual achievement" model and the second a "social change" model. The perspectives of all of the instructors interviewed for this report fall into the first category, oriented to individual achievement. This is consistent with the ABE program nationally, in which only a very few states support a social change orientation.

Even though the purpose may be summarized as one of mainstreaming adults into the middle class through individual achievement, it is nonetheless complex. It is based upon an assumption that the development of reading and writing skills by the individual will enable a change of personal and broader life circumstances. An individual's place in society is viewed as intimately linked to level of educational attainment; ABE is seen as a "second chance" to get back on the educational and the societal mobility ladder. In the process, it is assumed that increased reading ability provides access to resources and information. Calder explains,

> Adult basic education works with adults who for whatever reason have not had the opportunity to further their education and it works with adults who have potentials to improve their social life, their economic status... or it can actually improve things around home. It can give you a greater awareness of what's going on around you.

Functional Literacy

The purpose of ABE is seen by many instructors as assisting adults to "function" in today's world, or to apply reading and writing skills to the demands of daily living. Although the definition of specific functional skills theoretically depends upon each individual student's social context and aspirations, functional literacy has a normative aspect in reality. In other words, instructors see society as placing a set of demands on adults and it is the purpose of the ABE program to train adults to respond appropriately to those demands. ABE is not seen as an arena in which students struggle to develop a critical perspective on their places in society and make choices about how they wish to respond to the demands of the dominant group, but rather it is a program that trains adults to "fit in," as Crowder puts it. Eubanks echoes those sentiments when she asserts, "Basically, we are trying to get these adults on a functional level where they are able to understand and get into their slots in society and many of these adults are just basically quite capable but they have not had the basic training."

The concept of functional literacy assumes that adults in ABE programs have been unable to function, no matter how successful they may have been raising families and maintaining employment. ABE programs teach the uses of literacy skills, or the applications of literacy to the tasks faced daily by middle-class, educated adults. There is no evidence in our data that ABE instructors recognize the culture-bound nature of their functional literacy goals. Schall, for example, explains, "My goal to start out is that they can function.... They can write a check, they can read the newspaper ads, they can read the labels, they can figure out a recipe -- can read it and figure out how to multiply it... just to basically function." Crowder provides additional examples of functional literacy:

> If they can't read then they don't know to go through this door or go through that door because they just don't know.... If you go in a store, a lot of stores will cheat you if you don't know that this is 50 cents per pound that a pound is 16 ozs. So, when they use a little scale they need to know these

> basic things in everyday living in order to function.

Calder expands the list:

> [ABE] teaches you things ...like how to buy insurance for your family. What kind of insurance could you afford.. How to get a drivers license. How to handle drug problems in your home if you have a child who is using drugs,... Alcoholism- you know, we deal with everyday problems in adult basic education.

Functional literacy is the first rung on the educational mobility ladder. Clark explains: "Well, [ABE] is taking the individual as far as he can go in dealing with the basic skills first and then progressing on further until they can go on into high school completion and keep on going." Crockett teaches in the ESL program and agrees that ABE is the foundation for additional schooling:

> [Students come] not knowing how to shop, how to use a bank, and even visiting with their friends they may not know the proper word to say. So I feel like their experience in an ESL program would be most effective for the rest of their lives.... It not only prepares them for the social part of it but it will also affect their educational life. ..[when] he can finish the ESL program and get into the ABE program. This is what we are really trying to get them ready for, is the high school program.

It is important to note that some instructors believe that the purpose of ABE is to develop functional literacy skills or academic skills to the eighth grade level, and others identify the ABE program as working to the twelfth grade level. Creech, for example, was asked if she felt there was a grade level equivalent limit to ABE and she replied, "Twelfth grade level." When asked for clarification, she replied, "I would say for the adult who doesn't have it, [everything up to the twelfth grade] is adult basic education."

Functional literacy is viewed as important in itself, regardless of whether the student moves into the GED program, as Mitchell explains: "They are coming frequently from 0 Grade or 2nd Grade and if we take them to 5th or 6th grade, that is very functional in their world. They are taking it home to their grandchildren- they are taking it home to their children. It's uplifting their whole household." Mitchell works with adults who enroll in the program with very low reading abilities. She feels that she has become "realistic" about what can be accomplished in ABE, academically. She explains,

> For a person in my classroom to write a paragraph- well, it's about the best I can ever expect ....I'm not 21 and expecting miracles anymore- what else can I say. I think that [ABE] is definitely going after a segment of our population that no other programs speak to and I think that you will never see tremendous gains by each individual student but I think you will see tremendous gains with the occasional student and small gains with the rest of the students. And I think that makes it worthwhile.

Coping Skills

"Coping skills" is a term that was used predominantly in the early seventies, prior to the emphasis on functional literacy. Many instructors continue to think of ABE as teaching coping skills as well as academic skills; coping skills include an understanding of the resources available to assist an individual with specific problems as well as development of the internal resources for personal problem solving. Kubel explains her understanding of the purposes of ABE: "It includes reading and writing and arithmetic plus coping skills -- how to get along in life, how to get along with each other." In addition, when students have problems Kubel believes the ABE program "has a responsibility to let [students] know what's available to help them."

Emotional, Psychological and Social Development

Although functional literacy and coping skills are important, many instructors believe that ABE programs primarily exist to help students "feel good about themselves." This is most often phrased as a goal to "build a positive self concept" and is discussed together with a related range of emotional and psychological objectives. Phelps describes "self concept" goals as: "Making that individual confident, making that individual know that he is real important in the world and not just a number or an object," and her definition is typical.

In this framework, ABE exists primarily to meet students' social and nurturing needs. This aspect of the ABE program's purpose is very important, because it is not dependent upon the assumption of an academically able student who progresses through ABE, to the GED and then, possibly, into postsecondary education. There are a number of students in the ABE program who appear unable to make such progress, but are considered appropriate for the program anyway. Clark describes her feelings about a group of students who have been attending for three years but have made minimal academic progress:

> I feel so much empathy for them, you know, I mean my heart breaks for them and I feel like... we are meeting their needs because they come to class, they have interaction with other people.... I just think it's kind of like a second home for some of them that have been here for three years... .They want to be with people and they need people and we help them out with different kinds of problems.

Instructors appear to feel very strongly that ABE programs must develop a "family" feeling in order to meet students' social needs. East, for example, asserts that, "Somebody said last week that we're a family in here and that makes me feel good and I think they all feel good. And that's really what ABE is all about. It's really making adults feel good about themselves by picking up the skills that they didn't get." McDonald adds, "It's a social program that's needed in the community also. And a lot of times your social life can be just as important as anything else.... Now, [students] worked hard, but they wanted this social life because they don't have anything else, you know, as far as social."

Preparation for Life

Put more broadly, ABE's purpose is perceived as "preparing a person for life" (Alston). The cultural assumptions implicit in this statement of purpose can be seen in Alston's expansion: "It is basic to everything else that we do. If you're talking about working at a grocery store or shopping, or preparing a home budget or skills you need in a market place or any area, you can't do it without basic education." Instructors appear to assume that the ways they accomplish tasks and the roles they play in middle class culture are not only consistent with the aspirations of ABE students but also are the basis for adequate functioning in any adult's life, regardless of sociocultural context. Cozart explains, "You can teach [students] to read, you can teach them to spell, you can teach them how to do addition, but what you are really there for is to teach them how to think. ..and how to get along in life not just in your classroom."

Most instructors appear to develop a deep personal commitment to ABE and to their students. They see ABE as an opportunity to nurture others and to make a difference in someone's life, primarily. Witt's perspective is typical: "I enjoy helping people and I like working with adults. Many of the students that we're involved with, they are in need of someone to understand their feelings." Barrett expands:

> If someone isn't better because they know me then what use am I. And what good have I done -- regardless of what my career is or who my family is or how much money I have or how little I have or where I choose to walk in my life -- for some reason it has to have touched someone for good or it has been of no value. And that's one of the reasons that I love this program because I really feel like that it is an opportunity for people to start all over again.

The major overall purpose of ABE appears to be to assist individuals to succeed in the middle class culture. When ABE is viewed as a specific educational program, this means that the academic foundation is prepared for students to move through attainment of their high school credentials into postsecondary education. When ABE is viewed more broadly, the social skills, self concept psychological attributes valued by middle class culture are as important as the academic skills; ABE is "basic" in the sense that it provides the foundation for appropriate daily interaction in the middle class world.

In our swiftly changing society in which all of us are feeling the need to be continuing lifelong learners, regardless of educational background, ABE programs provide opportunities for continuing schooling for adults whose needs often are neglected by the formal educational system. Instructors' perspectives on the purposes of ABE programs, however, appear to imply that ABE students are searching for "second chances" rather than continuing their lifelong process of growth and development. Thus, students' pre-existing skills, knowledge and experience are ignored and their existing competence devalued.

SUMMARY

Adult Basic Education instructors in North Carolina are deeply concerned and dedicated to addressing the needs of their students. They primarily are part-time employees who view their positions as opportunities to help others rather than as a professional commitment requiring specific training and continuing professional development. Instructors usually have college degrees, often in some area of education, and they tend to rely on the knowledge and skills they learned in college for meeting the demands of their positions in ABE. The instability and part-time nature of their jobs seems to undermine their motivation for taking the initiative to participate in continuing professional education related to ABE and inservice training does not provide any systematic approach to skill or knowledge development. In addition, instructors do not identify a set of skills unique to ABE instruction, but rather believe that genuine concern for their students and enthusiasm about program participation are most important.

Instructors tend to view ABE participants in terms of their inability to function easily in middle class society due to their lack of reading and writing facility rather than within the context of the students' primary sociocultural context. The positive characteristics attributed to students usually are related to program participation, such as determination and motivation. Students' lives are viewed as failures because they have not participated in school or employment mobility structures; ABE participation is viewed as a second chance rather than as part of a continuing process of learning. ABE programs exist to facilitate students' emotional, psychological and social development, according to the instructors. In addition, programs provide functional literacy and coping skills.

CHAPTER 6: REACHING FOR SUCCESS

ABE instructors must manage demanding, multi-faceted roles in order to respond to their understanding of the purposes of ABE programs and the characteristics of ABE students. Indeed, the data from this sample support the nationally prevailing concept of ABE instructor as recruiter, counselor, friend, confidante, teacher, resource broker and nurturer. The qualities of a "good" ABE instructor that are most frequently listed by instructors are: empathy, sensitivity, sympathy, patience, eagerness, energy, flexibility, and enthusiasm. These characteristics are directly related to the role definition, in which teaching is but one responsibility among many.

In order to meet these strenuous role demands, ABE instructors must be very concerned, dedicated persons who work well beyond the hours for which they are being paid. As Tickle says, "They don't pay me to do [all of these things]. I'll tell you that right up front!" And McDonald concurs: "If I was not just totally interested in people, I would not be here for the money because it's not there." Instructors report that they were not necessarily informed of the complexity and the demands of their roles when they were being hired. East recalls his early conversations with the program administrator: "This was stressed to me -- you didn't have to prepare. You had to know your material. You had to know how to teach reading, basic math, or GED preparation. You had to know it. But you didn't have to do any preparation at home and you didn't take books home." Of course, East finds the reality very different: "I'm carrying around six workbooks.... That is on my time, but it's part of what I do and it's important."

In this chapter instructors' perceptions of their responsibilities in relation to individual students are explored. This section does not include examination of the range of instructors' administrative responsibilities, such as initial testing and attendance reporting; nor does it include descriptions of programmatic responsibilities such as student recruitment, linking with other community agencies and general public relations. These are examined in subsequent chapters.

Instructors hope that by fulfilling their responsibilities they will be able to facilitate student success, although instructors' and students' criteria for success differ in some important ways. This chapter goes on to explore instructors' and students' definitions of success, including ways that students attempt to manipulate the instructional situation in accordance with their knowledge about their own learning abilities and preferences.

INSTRUCTORS' PERSPECTIVES ON THEIR RESPONSIBILITIES

Creating Individual Personal Relationships with Students

Instructors believe it is important to treat students with compassion and respect; this means developing personal relationships in which instructors are seen as friends and allies rather than as authority figures. Students must be treated as "individuals" rather than as names on an attendance roster. Many instructors appear to find this difficult; they seem to be struggling with attitudes and values they have inherited from the larger society and from their own schooling process. Historically college graduates have formed an educated elite and in this century illiterate and poor adults in the United States have been seen as lazy and unmotivated, their condition the result of their own lack of initiative.

The problems instructors are confronting in this area are reflected in comments such as, "You can't put yourself above them. You got to sort of let them know that you are one with them. ... I think you got to bring yourself down. ...You can't be the stern schoolmaster and you got to be sorta sensitive" (Hoyt) and "You have to look at your students, eye to eye, instead of looking down on your students" (Robinson). Implicit in these statements is the assumption that treating students as "equals" somehow differs from how these instructors have been trained, differs from their prior experience in formal education, or differs from the way other persons might treat the students. The desire to create relationships in which students feel they are treated as individuals and equals is undermined by the internalized equation between minimal reading skills and childhood. Crockett, for example, explains, "I do like this particular program and I think the reason is because this is like teaching children. I like to do all I can to see a student reach his or her height."

Meeting Individual Emotional and Psychological Needs

Clearly instructors believe they are responsible for meeting students' emotional and psychological needs and this is accomplished through some level of knowledge of and, at times, involvement in, students' personal lives. Instructors agree that, "We do more counseling than anything else" (Cleary). Rudd explains, "Going to school is practically worthless for these people if they have too many other problems on their minds... and this is what usually gets us involved. Somebody will come to class and you can tell they're upset and they can't concentrate." Rudd finds that students "will not be worth two cents in class" until their problems are addressed and, further, that many students are unaware of appropriate existing resources. Therefore, assistance with personal problems is seen as facilitating the learning process as well as a mark of the instructor's "caring" about individuals.

Many instructors said they had heard from "others" about the importance of being "professional," but they appear to equate professionalism with lack of involvement in the lives of individual students. This creates a direct conflict with the responsibility to meet students' emotional needs. As a result, instructors appear slightly defensive about their own "professionalism" and the concept is dismissed rather than confronted. Tickle, for example, asserts: "I don't see being professional as being cold and uncaring. I just don't. When one of the girls has a baby or has if a child is sick in the hospital I'll go to the hospital. Or if somebody is out ...I'll call her myself instead of ...having the recruiter to call. Because I really care about them." And Barrett recounts a conversation in which she said,

> 'You're supposed to be professional; you're supposed to keep that barrier ....I couldn't do it with my five year olds and I can't do it with my thirty-seven year olds.... I cannot do it.... A part of me is part of that class and each one of them becomes a part of me when I leave.... That's just the way life is.'

Since students are seen as chronic failures with fragile self-concepts and uncertain commitment to their learning, instructors feel that they must be careful when students respond incorrectly to assignments. Hoyt explains, "A lot of them just fall apart completely. You got to sorta feel them out and judge who can take what sort of -- you got to praise a lot." Robinson expands, "I think the awareness of that injured self-concept maybe is important, because they need a whole lot of reinforcement for the success they have. And when they fail, it needs to be played down in such a way that you can find a way to say that this is not exactly correct, but this is good about it." Related to this is the feeling that students need "encouragement in small steps" (Scoggins). Thus, feedback has to be individualized to respond to each student's incremental learning. This careful attention to classroom climate is supposed to insure a "safe" environment for students, as Clark explains: "No one puts anyone else down and everyone is praised for their little bit of knowledge that they do get."

Instructors expect that meeting students' personal needs will involve time spent outside the classroom. Rudd, for instance, explains:

> A lot of work we do ends up being counseling. You may need to talk to a case worker about this person or talk to somebody out at Tech about getting some of our students into a curriculum out there if they are finishing up getting their diploma. I haven't had to go to court yet for a student but I expect that will come one day. I've gone lots of places for them.

It also can extend to providing financial assistance. Kubel relates a conversation she had with another instructor in her program who apparently feels that such involvement is natural and important:

> [The other instructor] said, '[Last night] I took my children and we spent two hours down at the jail house. [A student] called me last night and said that her son had wrecked a rental car and he was down there in jail and would I come help her.' And this teacher ended up paying part of this student's son's bail so he could get out of jail. And you know, this is kind of what goes on.

Assistance also can simply take the form of inviting speakers to class who represent services that are relevant to the circumstances of individual students, such as those dealing with alcoholism or physical abuse.Resource broker for individual students

ABE instructors appear to feel that they are responsible for amassing and constantly updating a broad range of information about employment and educational opportunities and resources for assisting individual students with their diverse personal and family problems. The instructor is seen as the liaison between the world in which the information exists and the world of the individual student. Tickle, for example, attests: "I'm forever going from here up to the main building... to really talk to the people there to see what jobs are available and what jobs some of these folks who are in this class would be able to do. And when I find out something like that, I'll come back and tell them." Crowder collects information about educational programs that may provide alternatives for her students in the future:

> I've had contact with the supervisor at the Learning Lab -- I try to find out what's expected of the students ...in order to get their GED, ...what's expected of them to work towards their adult high school diploma.... Because of the various programs we have here at [the community college] I try to be aware of anything that anybody else can use... .[If they're interested in a] vocational field, then I try to find out what's required for that class.

"Keeping" Individual Students

This emphasis on attention to individuals leads instructors to take personal responsibility for "keeping" their students; instructors often talk in terms of "keeping" and "losing" students as direct consequences of the relationship they establish. Eubanks, for example, claims that she "keeps" her students by establishing a "humanitarian" environment in which she is "one member of the group." Kubel, on the other hand, "lost" a student:

> I got a lot of new students in at one time, and I couldn't get around to testing all of them and by the end of the week I realized that I hadn't gotten to this one student, and at the end of that Thursday she told me that she wasn't going to come back anymore, and I said "why?" And she said "because you assumed that I could read something, and I can't read anything." And so, I lost her.

When students leave the program their instructors often feel it is their responsibility to reach out to them with a telephone call or a card encouraging them to return. Kubel continues: "I called her several times after that, and she said "no, I can't come back."

Instructors are responsible for gathering relevant materials from numerous sources, as East, an ESL instructor, explains: "You sort of have your antennas out. If I'm at the library and I see books that I think people in here would benefit from, or if I'm in a conference and there's a book on English for... secretaries, I'm going to make sure I get those books, because I have two students who could use them."

This individualization of content is seen as important for keeping students, as Cleary describes: "You have to really bait them for a while and I like to use the newspapers and really make them enthusiastic about the learning center and what's available and going on to school- just anything to keep them."

As instructors choose materials they try to exhibit sensitivity to an adult's "poor self-concept." Robinson has used young children's coloring books in his ABE classes to teach phonics and he explains,

> I was very careful about how I brought the phonics books in, because there's hardly any other way to teach those sounds except to use pictures.... And so, I think that's the big difference [between teaching children and adults]. It's how you approach those methods, and when you introduce what. Because it's the same thing you have to teach, but you have to be a lot more careful. If a child needs to have their self-esteem built and needs to be treated in a way that builds their self-concept, and so forth, an adult needs it twice as much, if they're walking into a classroom trying to learn how to read.

Helping Students Meet Their Individual Goals

Instructors appear to believe that students come to the program with individual goals for ABE participation, and that it is their responsibility to assist each student to meet these goals. In a previous chapter it is suggested that ABE students really share a common goal, to a great extent: to learn how to read with a certain degree of facility. The reasons and motivations underlying this goal are exceedingly complex and vary among individuals. Students also hope to be able to use their new skills in a range of application contexts, some of which they identify when asked their goals or reasons for coming to ABE. Desired application contexts can provide some direction for choosing materials of interest to students and for assuring that instruction in the classroom will be transferable to the students' broader environment. Instructors often mistake application contexts for goals, however; instructors then feel that they are faced with meeting a multitude of discrete, student-specific objectives.

Students will place their acquisition of reading skills in a larger framework of longer-range educational and employment goals which tend to represent students' desires for mobility on an educational or professional hierarchy. Again, instructors believe that it is their responsibility to assist each student to meet his or her individual goals. Instructors appear to apply a normative framework to goal statements, judging them on the basis of the extent to which they are consistent with the instructor's knowledge of the student's ability and the performance demands implicit in the goal. This process can create dilemmas for instructors who feel responsible for encouraging ongoing schooling aspirations at the same time that they are protecting students from failure.

Many times instructors feel that students' goals are beyond their abilities or "far-fetched;" Barker summarizes the conflict felt by many instructors in this circumstance: "I think sometimes they have such unrealistic goals and sometimes it's real hard for me to know when to stop feeding a fantasy and not destroy a dream. I don't know." Crowder expands: "Sometimes you try to get them not to set their goals too high because you want them to reach the goal. So you counsel them on -- you're not telling them what to do but you try to get them to be satisfied with what they need."

On the other hand, some students are seen as having aspirations that are "too low." Crowder continues:

> First of all I want to meet their goals. And then a lot of times I set personal goals for them. I may not say I want you to get your GED but within myself I will say, you know, this person -- I'm gonna continue with this person or I'll push this person until he gets his GED.... It may sound like I'm setting goals for them but I try to get them to set a goal that's comfortable for them that they will reach.

The problem is, "If he gets to the point where he just cannot reach that goal that I set for him or a goal that he has set, then he may not return."

Eubanks also feels a responsibility to encourage individual aspirations even though that may appear to contradict the valuing of students' goals:

> When a student comes to me I have to know where he wants to go; in other words, if I feel that if the student, based on his tests, is able to move [further] -- if he wants to write a letter, I will say, look, you need to go beyond this. Now I know that I should not do that, but -- well, when you have completed your own goal, I think that's fine but I believe... that a student should become all that he or she is capable of becoming and sometimes personal goals -- you can stretch your own limitations there and I think this is where we need to counsel them.

Rudd assumes that all students enroll in ABE as the first step on the educational mobility ladder. She explains, "They always tell us in training about that lady who wants to learn to read well enough to read the Bible and there are some of those, but you think about how hard the Bible is to read. You realize if they can read that you probably could go ahead and get your diploma." Although some students say they just want to learn to read, Rudd believes that the high school diploma -- "that's what they really want."

Instructors also struggle with responses to student employment goals that are related to eventual GED attainment. Calder has come to terms with it this way:

> I don't like to use... the better job thing because I've had a lot of students come in and say, 'Well, I've got to [get my GED] so I can get a job.' ...Sometimes it helps and, of course, it gives them a greater chance of getting a job but we

> can't guarantee them a job if they come through the ABE program and do that and get their GED ....We can say, 'Well, you can get a better job if you have your GED,' you know, you probably can. But right now there's not that many jobs available out there and people are struggling everywhere. But... one of the things I tell them is the fact that you don't stand a chance if you don't get it.

Intuitively, instructors realize that students' employment goals involve more than simply acquiring a credential, although instructors do not appear to be well-equipped to place the credential in some perspective for the students.

Instructors are walking a fine line between their avowed responsibility to be responsive to individual student's goals and their sense of personal responsibility for protecting, counseling and facilitating the mainstreaming of their students. The internal conflicts instructors experience must be placed in the framework of their fears about talking to students realistically about their skill levels, the fragile egos attributed to students and the prevailing image of students as failures looking for new beginnings. At all times, no matter how clear or muddled instructors' descriptions of their dilemmas with goal setting may be, instructors appear to feel that they have the responsibility to judge which goals are reasonable and which are not. It is not clear that students are realistically apprised of the relationship between where their skills are now and what would be needed to meet or exceed their personal goals; students' ability to participate in the process of evaluating their own goals, therefore, is undermined. Instructors do not discuss ways of helping students develop the ability, the skill and the knowledge base to make these decisions for themselves.

PERCEPTIONS OF SUCCESS

Instructors' Perspectives

A thorough understanding of instructors' criteria for success is essential for evaluating the effectiveness of ABE, since they provide insight into instructors' evaluative frameworks. It is important to note that the patterns described in this section are quite strong across differing programmatic contexts, student and instructor characteristics and geographic location. Since instructors have little or no professional training in adult basic education, these patterns probably reflect the prevailing program norms in North Carolina's ABE programs.

From the perspective of instructors, success as an instructor and student success are intertwined. A successful instructor is able to facilitate the development of particular student characteristics which may be cognitive, attitudinal, or social. These student characteristics, according to instructors, should enable the student to experience success in the program. Instructors' perspectives on the characteristics of successful ABE students correspond to the instructors' understanding of the learning to read process and of the characteristics of ABE participants. For those instructors who see the learning to read process as one of slowly building subskills (learning individual sound-letter relationships in a hierarchy) toward a delayed reward of "reading," students need to have "patience," "fortitude," and the "willingness to stick with it" (Wren). Wren continues, students must "realize that they've got a learning problem... and ...that perhaps gains are not going to come very quickly. They might be stretched out over a long period of time." Mills adds: "They have to be willing to give up some things, I think, in order to really just hang in there." "Good" instructors, therefore, are those who "can motivate students to where they're going to stick with a class" (Brock).

Once students show that they are highly motivated and willing to work hard and attend continuously, it is the instructor's responsibility to provide learning experiences that enable "success." Instructors such as Todd report: "I tell that to students-- study and do what has been asked of them to do, and they will have no problem." The definition of student success is problematic, however, since there are no common guidelines or criteria for success. The simplest way to identify success is through changes in academic skills or grade level attainment; when students can read at the eighth grade level and are no longer eligible for ABE, they may be considered successful, or completers of the program. Many instructors feel that this normative standard is the criterion used by the program to identify success, as Kubel comments: "We're always encouraged to have students move on, to get out of the program."

Movement on the Hierarchy. This way of assessing success is based upon a concept of learning as the successive acquisition of skills in a hierarchy; Clark's record keeping system is typical of many instructors and reflects this notion of incremental progress: "I have folders on every student and I can tell them within three minutes exactly where they are -- if they are in division, decimals, wherever they are." At specific points in the hierarchy, students move into new programs or program components. For example, when introductory level ESL students develop English speaking facility they can participate in ABE, as Hoyt explains: "Some of my students I've had two times but I won't send them up because I don't think they could speak well enough." Eubanks identified a particular student as successful because he not only has completed his GED but is now a full-time student in the community college and doing well. The Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) is the primary judge of success in ABE, validating a student's appropriateness for the GED program.

Students' Goals. Some students do not appear to desire or have the ability to move through an ABE skills hierarchy into the GED program; this complicates defining success or program completion. In these cases instructors refer to the "students' goals" for assessing success. Mitchell's comment is typical: "Whatever makes them happy makes me happy." Therefore, instructors differentiate between their perception of the program's criteria for student success (acquiring the GED) and their own (meeting student's goals). Tickle explains:

> The school's idea to me... is to carry the person from where he is on a grade level through high school completion....

> [But] there are two more elderly women who come and success for them was learning to add two numbers and to move from adding one digit numbers to adding two digits of numbers to three. So success for me is what a person hopes to accomplish, and if they accomplish their goals, that's success.

There appears to be some confusion here between assessing incremental progress toward the major goal of learning how to read or learning basic math and success with actually meeting that goal. It seems that instructors substitute incremental progress goals for longer range educational and social mobility goals when it appears that students are not going to make the progress necessary to begin climbing the social mobility ladder. An additional area of confusion is created by the use of students' desired application contexts as goals; Creech describes a successful student who is struggling with library books on his own. Cleary's successful students were able to help a waitress figure their meal tax and one of Calder's successful students is now helping her child with homework.

Instructors discuss "meeting students' goals" as if those goals existed separately from the students' interaction with the ABE program and as if incremental progress goals and longer range social mobility goals were interchangeable. In the preceding section, however, instructors' sense of responsibility for helping students set "appropriate" or "realistic" goals was discussed; it is attainment of these negotiated goals which becomes the measure of success. Furthermore, students' goals are complex, not necessarily known or understood by instructors and not necessarily related to the diagnostic and assessment instruments or instructional materials used in the program.

The problem of assessing success is compounded by those students who appear to be unable to learn, even when they have the characteristics of "successful" students. They attend class regularly and work diligently, but seem to learn slowly, if at all. Kubel, for instance, describes working with a student: "I really am having a difficult time with [this student]. We've been working with her for three days now, on just the difference between the adding sign and the subtraction sign, or the fact that she needs to punch that "equals" button after she gets through. It's just going to take a long time."

Trying Hard. Instructors appear to have difficulty separating respect for students' determination from assessment of skill acquisiton. Instructors are unwilling to say that students are not successful when these students maintain continuous attendance but nonetheless do not appear to learn. Rather than re-evaluating the instructional approach, instructors expand the criteria of success to include student characteristics such as "working hard" in addition to actual skill acquisition. In other words, the development of characteristics that are supposed to enable skill acquisition has become an alternative criterion for student success, regardless of actual progress learning how to read. As Crowder explains, "As long as they're trying I don't consider them a failure." In this way continued expenditure of resources for these students is legitimized and instructors are not confronted with a need to examine their professional abilities. Schall explains, "As long as that student comes back for more, you're doing something right."

This dual set of criteria for success -- skill acquisition and continuous effort -- is clearly evident in Hart's comments:

> My idea of a successful student is one who does their work well, and retains that information.... [But] I don't think this [particular] man's ever going to take the test, much less, if he takes it, he'll never pass it, because I think he's already forgotten how to do long division, and we're already way over here doing the volume of cylinders, so he doesn't retain his information. But he's a success in that he's continually coming.... This man is determined to continue to come, and I don't know if it's just something for him to do, some place for him to go for two hours two nights a week, but he certainly is determined. I think he's a success in his own right. But certainly a success would be also someone who passed the [GED] exam too.

Social, Emotional, Psychological Development. The purposes of ABE programs are much broader than simply academic skill acquisition, although that may be seen as the easiest to measure. Social, emotional and psychological development also is important, so student success in these areas also is gauged by instructors. Some instructors believe that success in these areas can lead to academic development, as Mitchell explains:

> If that student is happy in the program and if he is making progress, even if it's not terribly measurable, if he's making progress either academically or socially, or psychologically -- if he is making progress in any of those areas then he eventually can make progress in all of those areas, I feel.

Other instructors believe that academic success may not follow, but that does not matter. For example, Kubel asserts that students are successful "if they feel good about themselves." She continues, "We've had some students that have been in here three years and are still reading on about a first grade level. Well, by our measures we have failed, but if we are able to help this student also in coping skills and helping them through life, then I feel like this helps."

Many instructors assert that students who have "reached their potential" may be considered program completers even though they may not attain entrance into the GED program. Eubanks, for example, explains,

> We have students who have entered the class year after year but they're simply not able... to complete -- In other words, they have almost reached -- I would hate to say this -- their potential.... When a student has gone as high as he can go and has done all he or she can go and has reached the goal that he or she has set, I will consider that student a completer.

None of the instructors we spoke with would consider such a student ineligible for continued program participation, however; only their academic progress has been completed. The program can always provide access to new information, resources, problem solving, friendships, socializing opportunities, caring, and other assistance for adults seen as "lost" in the larger social world. Clark's explanation is typical:

> Some people can't write, some people can't take tests, and [this student has] got some type of problem and she's never going to be able to progress. I mean, apparently, if she hasn't done it in three years, she's not going to do it three months from now. But I just don't think it's right for us to say, 'I'm sorry, you can't come into this class anymore because you can't progress.'

Brock asserts: "Learning is a continuous process all through our lives; it doesn't have to be an instructional situation." ABE instructors, however, are faced with identifying the learning that should take place within ABE programs in order to feel that they and the students are successful. The most clear-cut indicator of success is movement on the hierarchy of educational attainment. When recourse to this indicator appears inappropriate instructors have developed a complex system of alternative indicators, including application of new skills in daily life contexts, incremental progress and continuous attendance. It is important to note that instructors do not refer to employment, nor do they discuss students developing a deeper understanding of themselves as learners or citizens. In addition, instructors do not question the relationship between their own skills and knowledge and the success of students.

Students' Perspectives

Students assess their success and progress in terms of new skills, their ability to apply those skills in a variety of contexts, and attitude change. Many students talk of feeling embarrassed in the past by their inability to read and write; new abilities and attitudes are seen as eliminating old deficiencies. Other students, however, are quick to point out that they are pleased with change because it builds upon their previous achievements. Rustin, for example, attests that she is "picking up stuff I didn't know." She adds: "It do make you feel a little better about yourself, but I don't feel bad about nothing I can't do. But I do feel better that I can do more, you know."

New Skills. Students assess their new skills in a variety of ways, many of which relate to instructors' analyses of movement on a hierarchy of skills or programs. Some students examine daily increments; Ingram explains: "Even if I don't come over here but for one day, I've learned something that day." When asked what he learned today, he replies: "I just said, well I wonder what the name of that book is and [the teacher] got to showing me...how to break things down so in a few minutes I looked at that book and I read the name of it." This daily examination of incremental progress often is related to daily assignments, and is described in those terms. Gentry, for example, was asked if she had learned something that day. She responds by pointing to her reading book and claiming: "I've worked from right here all the way to there; that's quite a few pages." The implication is that completing book pages corresponds to learning new skills; this reflects the framework held by many instructors.

Students also assess progress over the period of time they have been attending. Again, these are phrased in terms of their class assignments, often, as well as in terms of a hierarchy of grade levels and books completed. Goodleigh, for example, describes her work: "I read a story in that book and then I have questions, a test at the end of that story." She examines her progress: "The first week I don't think I did very well, but I don't think I've have failed one since I've been coming. You know, I maybe missed one or two questions out of twenty, you know, something like that." Gentel feels good because she just finished a "whole set of books." Fisch knew she was ready to move into another class when she, "finished all the books." Malone points to a book she now is able to read and recalls, "Before, well like this book here, when I first come in here I couldn't tell you probably a half a dozen words that was in it -- in the whole book." Royster compares his levels: "I scored like on a 4th Grade level in reading. I have come up to 7th Grade."

Fisch describes her progress this way: "I think I was on about level 4, but I'm on about level 8 now." When asked how she assessed this progress, she replies:

> Because when I first started in there, they've got books in there from like the 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th -- all the way up. And so they started me out in the 4th -- the 3rd and the 4th and then after I had finished, I came and I just finished then all my books in there. I finished them one by one, and kept a record of the stuff what I did. And that's how, when they looked at my folder and they saw the work I did, and the record I kept, then they knowed I was ready to go on.

In these examples, the judgment of progress is based upon test performance, teacher assessment and book completion, rather than students' assessments of their ability to use new skills. Mr. Tyson feels he learned enough to satisfy the instructor and perform on tests, but he is not satisfied. He explains: "Well, I learned more about math. I learned more about, well, let's say something about language, and some other things. But I will say, not too much. Just enough to sort of pass me over. Well I just tell it like it is now." Many students talk about instructors giving them tests to judge skill development; they understand that test performance is the instructor's major criterion for progress.

New Applications for Skills. Many students assess skill changes in terms of their ability to apply reading, writing and math skills to the demands of their lives, regardless of their test performance. Davice, who works in a laundry, explains:

> I can see how the program has helped in my job. We made a chart for price per pound of laundry up to 36 pounds. I can

> see a difference. Now I can figure out the cost of 38 pounds. We had a box of coat hangers to come in. It said 5-D on the box. Nobody knew what that meant. I remembered that D is the Roman numeral for 1,000. So, we counted and there were 5,000 hangers.

Jackson is pleased that he can read most of the newspaper now; he asserts: "You don't know how it feels to do that yourself.... You just can't imagine if you couldn't read and write and you have to ask somebody else think up letters for you every time." Mrs. Tyson comments that now, "We can read most of what we get at home." For Jones, the task is simply interpersonal communication: "When I first came here I couldn't read at all.... [Now] it's better. I can communicate with peoples better. I can talk to peoples better." Abernathy has been helping her son with his homework for the first time; Goodleigh is able to do simple paperwork connected to her job now. Carradine also attests: "I can read all of my work orders now; do all of my job. I don't have to ask anybody to read them for me. I can read them -- anything that's on there."

Pittman sees a difference for herself as a consumer; she explains: "I used to go downtown and it would maybe be a thirty percent discount. I didn't know what that meant, but now I can do downtown, I can see a sale and if it's thirty percent off, I can figure out now what that thirty percent represents." Gentel is pleased that now she can read materials found in the house:

> Before I went mostly I was reading little small words I say around about 2nd or 3rd Grade and some of them I wasn't doing too good with them. But now I could, like, government and stuff like that -- big words like that. Some of them- right smart of them I can pronounce and everything.... I can look in the paper now. Well, I put it to you this away, before I started school... I wouldn't even pick up a paper or a magazine or something like that and try to make out now word in it.... Now I picks up papers and sometimes I does -I think I does pretty good. I almost read a whole paragraph.

Howard agrees; when asked if he sees a difference in his work, he claims, "It hasn't helped me over there I don't think but at home it has...I read the paper.... magazines.... like Time magazine, T.V. Guide." Brookes now can read the newspaper also. When he comes to a word he does not know, he is able to deal with it: "Before, I probably couldn't have even read the want ads for jobs, and like that, but I can do it now -- biggest majority of it. Once in a while, I run into words I don't know. But a lot of them, I can work them out, where I couldn't work them out before I started."

Royster has applied his new skills to helping other veterans deal with the VA system. He describes:

> You get to where you can read the forms, you can fill them out, that ain't no problem.... I've been helping several people get... disability started -- just different forms. Applications for home loans and stuff. It's hard to fill them

> out if you ain't never filled one out. They ask you a lot of questions and it ain't got nothing to do with borrowing money for a house. It's the VA way, you know, the government way. Just like everything else.

In addition, Royster's relationship with his youngest son has improved. In addition to helping him with homework, Royster explains:

> We can set down together and read. Like we love to fish and hunt and we have all kinds of books on fishing and hunting. And we'll sit down and read an article together and we'll discuss it and see what's it's like to -- like it's a new lure that comes out, we can read about it and we can discuss it. Now we can discuss the pros and cons and decide whether we might like to buy some. Or we can read articles about new guns that's coming out, we can discuss that.

Students also describe their success in terms of tasks they have learned to do that require some reading and writing skills. This differs from the previous examples of skill application because these are actual tasks that have been the subject of ABE instruction, rather than tasks to which students have applied skills learned in other contexts in the classroom. Students value learning to do "ordinary things" such as writing business letters and checks in ABE. Lewis lists: "I can write my name,..I can spell my name...and, I can spell love and my mama's name, I can write mama's name." Lundin adds: "I couldn't even write my name before I started here, but now I can, and my address. I learned all that." Kendall feels proud that he can send his own mail off and write checks.

These adults are applying their new reading skills to tasks that already exist in their homes and workplaces, facilitating their ability to function as spouses, parents, friends, workers and citizens. In some ways, this appears similar to the instructors' emphasis on "meeting student goals." However, it is important to note that these students are describing a process of building upon the foundation created through their years of working, raising families and confronting daily life tasks. They are enhancing their lives through developing basic education skills, rather than beginning "new" lives or rejecting the past. Many of the ways in which they have applied their new skills would not be considered "goals" in the sense used by the instructors because they could not have been articulated prior to the actual occurrence of a situation to which the students applied their new skills.

Attitude Changes. Students also discuss changes in their attitudes as an indicator of success. This may include their attitudes toward themselves (self-concept), their attitudes toward schooling, learning or reading, their attitudes about their potential and the future, their attitudes toward the use of their time, and their attitudes toward friends, family members and community participation. Attitude change appears to be the result of two factors: engaging in an attempt to change one's life circumstances as well as actual achievement. For example, Mann asserts that now she "feels like a better person." This is due to "at least now I'm trying to do something to improve myself instead of just letting it just go" as well as changes in skills; she continues: "Making the deposit slips is easier now and the checks and all, it's easier." Stafford also links confidence and achievement: "I have more confidence that I'm able to do more than I did." And Clement concurs: "The more I learn the better I feel about it."

King explains,

> My attitude has changed and I look at life a little bit different... more open... and I feel good about myself now that I'm going back to school and I feel like I'm accomplishing something.... It's made me more optimistic and generally happier. Like I said, it just kind of opened things up for me and I see things a little clearer.

Abernathy is nearing completion of her GED and concurs: "I'm a lot prouder of myself -- my self-pride is a lot better. I mean, this is one of those things that basically, in a way, I never dreamed I'd ever finish it." Stevens also asserts that: "I have more confidence in myself. I feel better about myself. You know, there are things that I did I can cope with better than I could if I had not come."

Goodleigh's attitude toward reading has changed as her skills have improved; she adds that, "I notice I read more and I get more out of my reading because I pay attention to what I am reading." Oates also asserts: "I read more now. I keep plenty of books around and every time I get free time I'm into me a book." Petersen notes, "I notice the difference myself, and I never did like to read but I'm getting so I like to read." And Brookes offers: "I try reading more than I did before." One of the consequences of this developing enjoyment of reading appears to be increased use of the public library; many students describe using the library when they have some free time. They can read in privacy, at their own pace, the librarians are helpful, and the library is quiet. Hooper describes: "[I] keep a lot of tracks going back and forth to the library. They helps me out a lot, too, on reading. ...I go down there sometimes and set there a couple of hours just reading at the pace that I want to read."

Students also appear to develop an enhanced appreciation of the spelling, pronunciation, meanings and uses of words. For instance, Hayward is a minister and is concerned about public speaking. He finds attention to phonics particularly useful: "Pronunciation, learning the vowels and basic things of reading, you see, as putting emphasis on words to bring them out -- that was one of the particular areas that I needed a lot of information. It meant so much." Jackson finds that words are complex, and not always what they appear to be. He provides a metaphor to explain his developing understanding of reading. He was in the Civilian Conservation Corps when he was young, and he draws on that experience:

> A lot of people [would] say, 'Ain't you in the army?' I say, 'No, I'm not in the army, but I wear army clothes there and

> dress like the army, and do the job like the army do, get out there and jump up and down and do the straddle hop and all like that, like I'm in the army, but I'm not in the army.'

Jackson continues: "And that's the way it is with a word. It sounds like the same thing, but it's not."

Pittman's changing attitude has resulted in changes in her lifestyle. She explains,

> I've changed my life since I've come to this school. Now in my spare time, especially on Friday- okay, all I'd want to do on Friday is maybe get some beer or a fifth of liquor and set around and enjoy it... But now I don't think about that anymore because now I'm thinking about getting what I missed. So now when I have free times on Friday evenings or Saturday, I get a book -- one of my school books -- and I get busy at it. And it has bettered my life in another way: now I go to church on Sundays. I just want to do these things now.... I feel lifted in a higher status and when you talk about learning and education, that covers more than one field. That takes care of you all over, your whole self, and this way I feel like I am making a better change in my life. Not necessarily going to church, but it's a good place to be on Sunday morning.

Although instructors may feel that they can substitute consistent attendance for skills progress, it appears that skills progress remains a major criterion for students' assessments of success. Students consistently link attitude changes to progress in reading skills. Those students who describe attitude changes as the result of "doing something" for themselves also describe a relationship between these new attitudes and their learning.

STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE ABOUT PERSONAL LEARNING PREFERENCES

Instructors report discussions with students about what they want to learn, why they want to learn it and what may interfere with meeting these objectives such as personal or family problems and prior schooling experiences. However, instructors do not appear to discuss the knowledge students already possess about how they learn best. What seem to appear to instructors as students' feelings of the moment actually often reflect thoughtful choices students have made on the basis of their knowledge about themselves as learners. McKay, for example, is returning to school after many years; she feels she has forgotten "how to study," and, as a result, likes to spend long periods of time on one subject rather than skipping around among subjects. This helps her maintain her concentration. Forrest, similarly, has found that she needs relatively long periods of time to "really learn" but that, "every time we get started and get into what we're doing, it's time for a break." Therefore she and many other students simply skip breaks and remain at their tables working. Jay, on the other hand, finds that, "after a while it does get boring" to work on one subject, so she enjoys the break and likes to switch between reading, writing and math.

Clement's instructor will help him with "whatever I ask her," but he is careful about how he constructs his questions. If he is unsure about a word he encounters in his reading, he follows a procedure he developed:

> If I see a word and I'm not sure what it is... I ask her to spell it. That way I know if I'm right or wrong.... Then if I'm wrong I ask her to look at it. You learn better that way. What's the use in asking her to look at a word and tell you what it is. Best thing to do is to figure it out for yourself and ask her to spell it and see if you are right. That way you know.

Knott was diagnosed as dyslexic when she was fifteen and about to quit school; she explains: "I got that dyslexia.... I feel that I'm a real intelligent person, but I just don't get it out like other people ....It's like being blind in a way." She is using her knowledge about her own learning process as she learns math in the ABE program: "I have to have it wrote down. ...I can't figure none of it in my head even the simple ones; I've got to see it."

Pandel understands that practice is important to building his reading skill. He explains that "I have plenty of times to study at my house," but "they don't want me to take [books] home." Therefore, he is using his leisure interests as a source of supplementary materials and is reading photography magazines. Carradine knew he needed to learn how to form his letters, so he began learning by copying them from the back of his math book on his own. Many students say that they would like more class time; some adapt by coming to class early and working independently, as Buckner explains: "Usually when I get in the class and the teacher hadn't got there yet, I would start working to my books, whatever I had started working on before and I didn't finish it. I go right back to it or I would read a little bit."

Instructors place a great emphasis on developing a social agenda for the class, but not all students are interested. George, when asked if he knew his classmates, responds: "No, and I really don't want to.... If I get friends I'll start talking instead of studying or doing my work." Giles, a young student, asked her instructor if she could sit apart from the groups he was establishing at tables. She explains: "I prefer working at a table by myself because... if you see people that you know they want to talk and I don't want to talk. I'd rather sit by myself and that way I can get things done instead of running my mouth. Because I'm the type person that loves to talk." Pandel's experience is similar: "I have not met a one of them. I come in and do my work and leave." Pandel finds that the mixed age groups and support of social interaction seems to interfere with his work: "Some of the younger people here talk while you're studying out there and it does really break your concentration."

Gentry, one of those younger students to whom Pandel is referring, has another perspective: "We'll sit and talk... and it's fun, all of us in here." Coney also is in the youngest age group of students and describes her instructor as "like a older sister to me. We get along fine." The other students in her class are older than she; some have children her age. She thinks of her classmates as her friends; she describes: "Sometimes they treat me like I'm close to their age or sometimes they treat me like their kid. We are real good friends and I think a lot of them." Even when there is a close group feeling, however, students rarely see each other outside class. Marshall's experience is typical: "When school finished, we just say, hope to see you next day or next week."

The social agenda is indeed a primary motivation for students such as Fisch, who explains:

> The teacher, she just be sitting up there, but we have to read. We have assignments.... Sometimes we could talk to each other and just have fun.... You could whisper to somebody and ask, 'What you make?'.... You get up in the morning, you be home, you just think about you can go to school, and talk to somebody, somebody that you ain't been around, like your brothers or your family or something. And talk to somebody else, and see what they been doing, and, you know, what they going to talk about today, and what they been doing, and they want to find out how you been doing, and stuff. Just have friends. It's fun. I like it.

STUDENT RETENTION, SUCCESS, AND THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM

Administrators' Perspectives

Instructors are evaluated primarily through their student enrollment and progress statistics, with an emphasis on "measurable" indicators. Lankler, for example, explains that successful instructors can be identified by the progress made by their students: "If a student makes progress from where they're at when they're enrolled in a class, we can measure that." McCroy admits, "Our system primarily measures by inputs, in other words, it's not so much how may finish but how many we enroll and have in the class.... It's easier to measure that than it is the successes of the students, there's no question."

Some programs also provide opportunities for student feedback, as Holm describes: "We have student instructor evaluation forms. At the end of each of our cycles our students are given an evaluation form, which contains about twenty items, in which they evaluate that instructor. Also the instructors, themselves, use the students. Sometimes they just say, lets have a gripe session today." It is not clear how or if this information is used by program administrators to improve the effectiveness of the instructional program.

In general, instructional program effectiveness appears to be assumed as an implication of student enrollment data. Test scores are the primary criteria used to identify those who have completed the program; "the cut-off point is 8.9 grade level" (Denton). Dependence on test scores, however, does not address the myriad indicators of success that instructors use and which are not measurable and will not appear on class rosters. In addition, it is difficult to gather information about instructional effectiveness from students who leave the program because the record keeping and personnel responsibilities have not been designed to support follow-up. Denton, for example, explains, "After five years they do away with records and we didn't have a computer so they don't have storage.... They haven't had a system for really keeping up with what happens to the student." Rich admits that "We try to follow up from time to time and do the best we can with the personnel we have." The lack of adequate record keeping and student follow up is seen as an institutional, rather than a programmatic, problem.

Administrators appear to share the instructors' perspective about students who remain in a program for a number of years but appear to be unable to progress academically. Mark, for example, comments: "Let a person stay in the program as long as they feel like they're benefitting from the program. ...He's progressing, but he's not progressing academically. Socially, psychologically, he's benefitting, you see." The "problem" associated with these students is that there is no special category for reporting their attendance, so it appears that the program is being ineffective with these students. Mark continues: "A person can stay in ABE for ten or fifteen years if they so desire and never get anywhere. ..so we should be able to categorize the student.... By that I mean, you know, in high school, in regular school, they have special ed. I don't like labels either, but that's a fact of life."

Although a great deal of emphasis currently is being placed on student recruitment and program publicity, efforts oriented to indepth local evaluation of the effectiveness of the instructional program often are minimal. It appears that administrators believe that student retention is facilitated by flexible location and scheduling of classes, employing instructors who are compassionate and, when possible, from the same geographic area as the students and use of materials that place minimal demands on the instructors' professional skills and knowledge. Beyond that point, the feeling seems to be that it depends on the students' motivation, innate learning ability and life circumstances.

Students' Perspectives

Enrollment figures provide a one-dimensional representation: student are in or out of the program. From the students' perspective, however, the reality is more complex. Their primary goal is learning academic skills; it appears that the one clear indicator of ABE program completion is movement into the GED program. Students who remain in ABE for a period of time, often a number of years, generally move in and out of active participation, partly based on the relationship between their assessment of the program, their assessment of their learning styles and needs and their life circumstances. Since student retention is a criterion for instructor success, it is important to understand students' perspectives on their movement in and out of programs.

Foremost, students describe assessing the program's apparent ability to assist them in meeting their goals. Mosely, for example, had left an ABE program a few years earlier because he found the work inappropriate; he remembers, "I couldn't read and the rest could and they handed me a book and said 'Do the best you can, I'll see what I can do when I catch up with the rest,' but it didn't work out, so I just dropped out." Shilling prefers the classroom situation he is in now to the learning laboratory he tried previously: "I felt like I was bothering them to ask so many questions about a certain subject and I felt like that I was having to study more on my own than I [wanted to]. You know, it just felt like I couldn't get the help that I really needed."

Forrest, similarly, did not like the learning lab approach:

> The teacher would give you some books to work in and tell you what you have to do- if you asked her for help, she might help you for a while, then when you finished so much work then they'd give you a test and if you don't it then you just take it again. I did well enough to pass the test but I thought that I wasn't reaching my goal, my goal was to learn - to learn how to read.... I wasn't really learning -- learning what I thought I needed to learn so I just stopped going.

Jones is considering leaving the class she in now because, "the class was too fast and the level too high and materials were too many at one time."

Some students are looking for a program that will provide an experience that differs from the kind of alienation they experienced in public schools. For this reason, Stevens left a previous program when he "felt like it was regular school." Coney, 18 years old, is waiting for a class in which she can be with more of her age peers: " I wanted to get out of this class. People in here are so much older than I am.... It was kind of like going to senior high." Ashley, on the other hand, credits her remaining in the program to the acceptance she felt from her instructor: "Without [my instructor's] encouragement, I wouldn't have been back."

Students also leave programs when there is an incompatibility between the requirements of the program and the adult's life circumstances. Pandel, for example, changed his work hours. He started working third shift and then driving to campus; he left because: "I couldn't learn anything because by the time I got there I was so tired." Giles found that working interfered with regular attendance so she left because, "When you can't come everything tears up so you lost track of everything -- you can't get enough done." Now that she's laid off her father has encouraged her to try again. Flowers left when he moved and could not afford the extra gas costs. On the other hand, Rains is concerned about confidentiality. He left because it made him "uneasy" to be in a program close to his home. Arnette left when she could not find family members to watch her young child. Eason left when she became pregnant and could no longer travel.

Sometimes, however, it is the program's hours or sites that change and work schedules cannot accommodate it: "And just when everything was going good we changed [hours]... and at the time I could not get off from work" (Giles). Mosely originally had been in a program he liked, but the site had closed because there were not enough people. Some students describe an active process of "chasing" the program when a site closes but the student wants to remain involved. Mann, for example, describes: "I went to New York for three weeks and when I come back [the program] was gone. And I didn't know- that's the first time I quit. I didn't really quit, I just didn't know where it was." One of her friends told her about the new program site, and she returned. Mrs. Tyson's instructor took responsibility for notifying her about new program sites: "As they changed different classes, at different schools, we went to several different schools, so she would notify us where it was going to be the next time when they were changed."

When students decide to leave a program, they report that they usually do not discuss the decision with their instructors. They do not expect the program to be flexible to their transportation, child care or work demands. In addition, as Mann describes, "I'm not one to open up and talk to people.... I've never done that. So I feel strange, you know: 'Is there any way you can work me into your schedule', you know. I'm just not used to doing things like that. ...I just never had to ask people for anything like that. I've always done it myself if I could." Also, students often do not see themselves as "dropping out;" Gentel's job hours changed and,

> Right at the time that I quit, I didn't think I was quitting. I just stopped all at a sudden kinda like and kept hoping something would break so I could go back because I never wanted to stop. So I just kept hoping and praying that some way or nother something would break and open up so I could figure out a way I could go back.

When students remain in a program, it appears to be linked to academic skills progress for many. Gentel, for example, asserts: "I couldn't read until I met [my instructor]. Maybe I could read my name or some small words and things like that but I couldn't read as well as I can now, like big, big words and things like that.... It gave me the drive to want to keep going for it." It is important that these decisions to remain and leave programs not be reduced to simple "reasons," however; the decisions are complex and examination of the many levels of complexity is beyond the scope of this study.

Instructors' Perspectives

Since students are seen as motivated when they enroll, instructors have tried to understand the relationship between student characteristics and the fact that many students do not maintain consistent program attendance. Rudd offers one common example:

> I have a student, well now, she's beginning to fade away again, she's a very restless type, but she showed up a couple years ago and sometimes they miss as much as two or three years. You see, I've done it long enough that I can see them

> returning.... But they just come back like they know when they're ready that the class is going to be." Rudd attributes much of this movement to "a timing thing- they're not really ready for school at that time.

Attendance problems also are attributed to lack of family support. Cleary explains:

> I've been here five years so maybe twenty or thirty [women] over this period of time that would sneak away from their homes, from their husbands, and come to school. And, of course, when their husbands are working shifts there will be weeks when I won't see them in class and that's why. And I've had a couple of them that have ended up separating from their husbands because they realized their potential.

Goodman concurs that some women "get yanked out of the program" when their husbands feel threatened by wives' progress in the program.

Instructors also are aware that many students have problems integrating ABE participation with available transportation, childcare, work schedules and other responsibilities. These issues tend to be placed in an arena of "student responsibilities" rather than "program issues." Many instructors appear to assume that since students leave for reasons relating to their attitudes or life circumstances, they will return when they are "ready," rather than when something changes about the program. Rudd believes that there are natural plateaus that occur in the learning process and that students allow other things to take priority when this happens. She comments, "If school isn't super rewarding an ABE student has got, oh, so many excuses."

Some instructors also identify their own inability to meet students' needs as a primary reason for students' decisions to leave, but they place it in a programmatic framework rather than questioning their own professional knowledge and skill. The program is organized so that instructors are required to work with relatively large numbers of students in groups that range, often, from nonreading to GED levels. Wren places himself in the place of a student and reflects, "It's discouraging, especially if you're a beginning reader. You come to class and somebody helps, sits down with you, five minutes the whole evening. And then you're just sort of stuck." And Mitchell agrees: "The smaller the classes the better. That's even more important than the materials."

Instructors are genuinely concerned about their students and would like to see a follow up system as part of the program. Merritt comments, "We have a high attrition rate and most of the time we don't know exactly why. I daresay most of my students drop because of frustration.... I do wish we had some way ...[to know] what happens to them after that frustration." Many instructors report that they do not discuss with students their reasons for leaving a program; when students return, Rudd reports: "I don't think I ever even ask why they quit."

IMPLICATIONS

Instructors have internalized a role definition and set of responsibilities that places extraordinary demands upon their skills, knowledge, abilities, time and energy. They try to be all things to each individual student. They interpret provision of adult basic education as encompassing the broad foundation for an adult's intellectual, social, emotional and psychological life. These are admirable aspirations, but it is possible that instructors, by being so deeply concerned and protective of their students, may actually undermine the adult student's ability to use the program as an arena for risk-taking, growth and learning.

It is significant that these ABE instructors appear to be concerned with a wide range of characteristics of individual students, including their personal problems, their interests, and their self-concepts, but instructors do not appear to feel responsible for individualizing according to learning mode or style. This does not seem to reflect a disinterest in effective teaching and learning, but rather the assumptions that adults learn to read the same way that children learn and that there is no specialized knowledge about the adult or about teaching that is needed in order to teach reading effectively to adults.

Students appear to have some knowledge about themselves as learners that does not appear to be utilized in the planning and instructional processes in which instructors seem to feel that they carry the burden of assessing student needs. The diversity of students' preferences points to the need to provide instructional situation alternatives, rather than simply using differences in skill levels as the criteria for assigning students to particular groups and instructors. In addition, it is important to recognize that these data imply that students sometimes will remain in a class because they feel that there is some way they can manipulate the situation to meet their needs and not necessarily because the instructor has designed the situation in accordance with those needs. Consistent attendance may say more about the determination and motivation of the student than has been understood previously. Many students do not simply remain in a program because it "feels good" to them. They may remain because they see the potential for meeting their goals in spite of the perceived limits.

The complexity of students' analyses of success underlines the importance of maintaining a flexible program structure in which evaluation is not tied to any one particular aspect, such as improved employability. Although students may claim that job mobility is a motivation for enrollment, they do not identify job mobility successes, at least at this point. Rather, they identify some improvement in job performance, a sense of increased future alternatives and enhanced personal potential. In addition, students find that attitude changes about themselves, their relationships with others and their relationship to reading are very important. This raises serious questions about the movement nationally to link literacy education closer to job-specific training. Students appear to feel that their enhanced sense of their own abilities is more important than learning job-specific reading skills. They find themselves able to apply their learning to their jobs when it is necessary and appropriate.

Many of the ways in which new learning manifests itself in students' lives lie outside of formal assessment instruments, existing record keeping procedures and a narrow interpretation of ABE legislation, although they certainly fit the intent for which ABE programs have been established. Students' perceptions emphasize the functional aspects of literacy education as well as the interrelatedness of attitude and ability. The range of ways in which students have applied their new skills further undermines the characterization of students as unable to develop a perspective on their lives or their schooling.

The literature in ABE is replete with studies which claim that "improved self-concept" is the major and most highly valued impact of ABE participation, according to students. The data presented in this section may be seen as supporting this claim. It is important to push one step further, however, to examine the relationship between self-concept and other outcomes or aspects of participation. No matter how warm and accepting a learning environment may be, if students are not learning how to read -- and thereby meeting their primary goal for attendance -- they know it. The data presented here suggest that changes in self-concept are intimately connected to changes in skills and that the presentation of self-concept and skills change as discrete outcomes is more illusory than real. Students may have an initial feeling of enhanced pride when they originally enroll in a program, regardless of concomitant progress. The issue facing ABE has to do with maintaining, deepening and supporting the continued development of those feelings through progress learning to read.

SUMMARY

ABE instructors feel they are responsible for meeting students' individual cognitive, affective and social needs, as those needs are perceived by the instructors. This creates some dilemmas for instructors who feel responsible for encouraging high aspirations and developing independence while protecting students from failure. Instructors seem leery of sharing this burden with their students, however, by helping students develop realistic frameworks in which to assess their own goals or define their own needs. Notably absent from instructors' analyses of their responsibilities is any mention of assisting students to take responsibility for their own learning.

Instructors consider themselves successful if they are able to assist students' movement from the ABE program into GED completion and, when appropriate, into the community college curriculum. When students appear unable or unwilling to succeed in this fashion, instructors have developed an alternate set of criteria for success that encompasses students' development of desired characteristics, such as continuous attendance and fortitude, and incremental progress in academic skills.

Students describe success in terms of new skills, the ability to apply new skills to life and work tasks, and new attitudes. New skills often are described in terms of progress with classroom work, such as books completed or levels attained. Applications of new skills may be found in all of the arenas of these adults' lives, enhancing pre-existing competencies. New attitudes relate to positive changes in self-concept, relationship to reading, and interaction with others. New tasks tend to be concrete and practical such as learning to write their names and addresses and use checking accounts. It appears that these assessments are interrelated and based on the foundation of improved ability to read.

Students clearly value their participation in the ABE program and believe that it has been an important, constructive aspect of their lives. Students often try to use their knowledge about their learning preferences to maximize their potential for success. Students' perspectives, their knowledge of themselves as learners and their ability to analyze the relationship between their learning styles and the instructional program do not appear to have been explored by most instructors, however. As a result, both instructors and students may experience stress and frustration that could be avoided.

CHAPTER 7: IN THE CLASSROOM

The preceding analyses of instructors and students and their perspectives provide a framework within which classroom interaction may be examined. In this chapter instructors' and students' perspectives on instructional methods, materials and classroom individualization are presented. Since students' learning abilities and styles are quite diverse, one of the salient factors in this study is the extent to which instructors have a "repertoire" of ways of approaching their teaching responsibilities. Most studies of ABE analyze the instructional process in terms of specific methods or materials used; since no one method or material will meet the needs of all students, we examined the extent to which instructors are able to create and use alternatives. Another way of viewing this issue is to examine whether instructors are dependent upon materials for structuring the teaching - learning process or whether they use materials as resources to support their own conception of the process for individual students.

Students describe their classes in terms that are very similar to those used by instructors. They describe working independently, primarily, with books or other materials that are geared to their "levels." They consistently find their instructors to be "real nice," "patient," "concerned," and "helpful." Students claim that they are able to work at their own "pace" or "speed," that instructors always are available for assistance, and that instructors will "go over it until I understand it." ESL students are particularly pleased that their instructors have "a clear speaking voice so it doesn't sound like they're mumbling."

Although students almost universally "like" their instructors and describe them in quite positive terms, their participation is not simply built upon their high personal regard for their instructors. Students also assess the extent to which the organization of instruction meets their needs. Students' analyses provide insight into the model of the learning to read process that they have internalized. In addition, the relationship between instructors' and students' assessments assists in understanding the ways in which instructors are indeed effectively meeting students' needs.

INDIVIDUALIZING INSTRUCTION

The one term that best summarizes the philosophy and range of responsibilities of these ABE instructors is "individualization," and it has numerous facets, many of which were explored in the preceding chapter. Perhaps the most easily identified aspect of individualization is gearing the schedule and pace of instruction to individual students. This can be pushed to extremes; some instructors pride themselves on being available to students whenever the student asks, with no regard to official working hours. Placing limits on one's involvement with students is seen as being unresponsive to students' "needs." Schall, for example, believes it is important "to be available at all times." She explains:

> There are some people that cannot come but maybe every two weeks and I leave it open to them to please call me if you do have at home time to read. And maybe they don't go to work but it's just maybe a transportation problem or a babysitting problem or whatever like that. I made them to feel free to call me during the day or anytime -- tell me what page they're on or what it's all about and we do it over the phone.

Instructors all cite the importance of teaching each student on his or her own "level." "Good" instructors are those who are able to adapt their teaching to the individuals in the class, but it can be frustrating when a group may include students whose levels range from nonreader through GED preparation. Therefore, as Barrett describes, "[A good ABE teacher is] somebody that can do twenty things at one time.... My girls are on so many different levels, it's very frustrating to me." In addition, even students on the same level may require different explanations. Hart, a math instructor, explains that an ABE instructor needs "an ability to rephrase a solution to a problem. To get down on someone else's level. The way I can talk with you, to show you something, I might have to rephrase it just a little bit for someone else to understand it."

The importance of individualizing according to students' levels creates problems for instructors whose only way of thinking about levels is in terms of elementary school grades. Since students' egos are seen as fragile, the instructors are faced with the dilemma of trying to treat adults with respect while withholding information from them. Thus responsibility for teaching at the correct level for each student takes on counseling overtones. Cozart's perspective underlines many ABE instructors' difficulty:

> The most valuable thing that you have to be able to do is take a complicated concept and make it very simple. But, you can't make them think that you are talking down to them. They may be reading on a fourth grade level but you don't want them to know it. You've got to still treat them like adults. You give them materials that are adult materials but written on a simpler level.

The importance placed on flexibility and responsiveness to individual needs creates pressures that often work against the training that many instructors have had in preparation for public school teaching. Tickle recognizes this when she comments that a good ABE instructor,

> needs to be a person that does not get frustrated when everything doesn't get done and isn't tied up neatly at the end of class or at the end of the week or at the end of the month. Because when you have that many students that you are trying to service and to meet the needs of, there's no way you can do everything. And you have to learn to live with that.

The content of instructional materials has to be individualized to reflect the interests of adults even though the skills -- and the methods -- are perceived to be the same as those taught to children who are first learning how to read. Wren explains:

> If you can... zero in on something that they enjoy, then try to maybe take a little time with them and help them with that.... Individualize whatever concept or word knowledge the individual needs. And whether that's if someone is interested in reading the Bible, somehow or other bringing what you're doing into Biblical terms, or if someone is interested in mechanics, what are you doing here, what has that got to do with mechanics? ...You have to make it meaningful for the student.

VOLUNTEERS AND TRAINERS

All instructors that we interviewed are dedicated to individualization. However, two distinct groups of instructors emerged from this analysis: "volunteers" and "trainers." Volunteers are instructors who have been trained in and use only one method of literacy instruction; it is tied to a specific set of materials. In North Carolina the volunteers are dependent on the Laubach system, primarily, although there are two instructors categorized as volunteers who use other systems. Some instructors who fall into this category equate the learning to read process with the Laubach method and refer to nonliterate adults in their classes as "Laubach students." Trainers, on the other hand, use a range of materials and methods, depending upon the characteristics of the students with whom they are working. They may use the Laubach system at times, when it appears to be the most appropriate way of working with a particular student. The characteristics of volunteers and trainers will be developed in detail in this section.

Diagnosis and Placement

Instructors administer diagnostic and placement tests between the first and third weeks of class in most cases. The state office requires that the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT) be administered to qualify students for the ABE program who have completed more than eight grades of public school. The test certifies eligibility for ABE when adults are functioning -- according to the WRAT -- below an eighth grade level. The WRAT essentially is used as a placement test in reading and math. Instructors supplement this information in a variety of ways.

Most instructors are told to administer the WRAT immediately to new students. However, a student's first class is treated delicately by instructors who believe that students' first impressions may determine whether they will return a second time. All instructors begin with a period of socializing, assisting members of the group to get to know each other and trying to help new students feel comfortable. Creech describes: "First of all, you introduce yourself and talk to the student... about why they want to learn to read." She continues, "And then I'll go on to explain what the course is like, a little bit of how it's taught and why it's set up the way it is." Calder claims, "I feel like I've lost a lot of students from administering that WRAT test the first night." Now, he explains, "The first two nights of my class we do very, very little work, because I do not want to give them any type of stress situation or they are going to drop out," and he administers tests during the third class.

The WRAT was criticized by almost all of the instructors we spoke with, but volunteers' and trainers' criticisms differed. Volunteers dislike the WRAT because they feel that students find it too threatening; their criticism refers to the nature of standardized testing rather than to characteristics of this specific test. Schall, for example, says, "I have lost a student because I had to give [the WRAT].... Now I might wait for the second time -- I might just slip it in at some other time and say, 'Just for the fun of it,' or something like that.... It really bothers them." Volunteers also criticize the WRAT test because it does not provide a "level" that is consistent with the ways in which their materials are leveled, as Rudd explains: "We give the WRAT test because the state requires us to do it; then we turn around and give the test that will tell us something so we can put the student in the right materials."

Trainers, however, criticize the WRAT on the basis of its perceived lack of usefulness identifying specific skills and they use numerous additional instruments and procedures for assessing students' skills. Calder, for example, believes that "the WRAT is not very accurate." Calder explains that, "on the WRAT test, all [a student has] to do is call out some words. There's just a list of words.... It doesn't test his understanding of comprehension." Therefore, Calder uses the "Joe Carter" reading and math tests which were developed by the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges for ABE programs. Calder thinks that these tests, "give you an over-picture of where the person is functioning -- his reading level." Merritt shares many trainers' concern with comprehension assessment; she uses a test that, "flows from basic sentence understanding to paragraph, short essay, and some inference and some abstraction."

Some trainers use the WRAT scores as a base upon which they build additional diagnostic measures as appropriate for individual students. Goodman, for instance, explains,

> I give the WRAT... [it] takes twenty minutes, it gives me a quick spelling, a quick reading, and a quick arithmetic level. Okay. Now I know the reading doesn't give me comprehension, but at least that gives me scores to go by. So I take the score and get a good book, and we sit down and read aloud. That tells me a whole lot. Whether, are they missing their vowel sounds, their blend sounds, and then I ask them two or three quick questions about it, just to see if they comprehended.... And they always tell you--Oh I'm horrible in math, I can't add. They give it away--Oh, I can't spell--I have trouble on this! So they'll tell you too, right away, what they're really having trouble with.

Brock also engages in extensive testing:

> We have an adult reading placement test. And if we see that

> they cannot do that, we give them the San Diego quick check. Then if we see that they're gonna be successful with that- that starts with the pre-primer level- then we have a test that will give you knowledge of whether they know their alphabet.... [And I] test them to see if they can discriminate sounds -- this is an oral test that I give them.... I try to see if they understand rhyming and to see if they understand the way that the letters blend.

In addition, trainers believe that information from testing and discussion has limitations; an instructor must actually work with a student for a period of time to develop a deeper understanding of the student's strengths and learning needs. Calder attests that, "It probably takes me a few weeks meeting with somebody once a week or twice a week... to know where they're actually at." The fallibility of the initial diagnostic process can lead to problems: "Sometimes my prescription of materials I want them to work on may be too easy and that's an insult to them or it may be too hard and they feel frustrated and leave" (Calder). In those cases Calder feels he has not met students' needs and is responsible for their decision to leave the program.

Volunteers move from testing right into instruction, since the testing provides placement information for a series of workbooks. Rudd, for example, is a volunteer. She looks to tests for placement information, rather than for specific skill strengths and weaknesses; she depends on the tests rather than seeing them as tools to assist her in understanding students. Therefore, Rudd is a bit baffled by the approaches of instructors who appear to fit the trainers category:

> It's very critical to have a good measurement of where the student is before starting with them. Now I know it was recommended to me once in a training session that you work with a student a couple of weeks and then test them but it seems to me kind of a waste of a student's time while you're casting around and trying to fit suitable material and also it maybe makes your teacher slightly retarded too if she can't come up with something that just suits.

Rudd's problems are solved through a combination of testing and her knowledge of the relationship between test results and her materials: "Whereas if you do test them and get an idea of exactly what they need,... I could just go right to a particular, even a part of a book."

Trainers, however, often include a step between testing and instruction: a conference in which the results of the tests are discussed with the student. Brock, for example, explains,

> I tell them the truth. I say, 'You're on a Level 4.' They say, 'What does that mean?' I said, 'It's equivalent to a 4th Grade level and you need to be reading at least on a 9th Grade before you have any chance of passing the GED.' And then I try to show them what do they have.... [and] I try to point

> out where their weaknesses are and their difficulties and then I say, 'Let's work on these areas.' I try to give them reasons for why they're studying this -- and this is what this is doing for you.

Eubanks uses this session to stress the student's strengths: "You must tell the adult that he or she brings experiences and knowledge to the classroom and, of course, you have some type of training to help the adult use what he already knows."

Instructional Materials as Methods

Volunteers approach students in their classes who need assistance with basic reading skills in one of two ways. The first is the most prevalent: they use the Laubach or some other commercially-produced system. As McGee explains, "You can just say, well they made this on this test, they work out of this book;... so far as me sitting down and deciding what they had to work at, it was all whatever they do on the test. And so I just take the books and give them and then we just work from that." The second approach is not to teach basic reading skills at all, but to bring in a Laubach volunteer who works individually with students who are learning basic reading skills. Wren explains that when students in his class were reading below the fourth grade level, they "would put them through the [Laubach] program" before he would work with them. Schall's situation is similar: "I have a volunteer that comes for the Laubach students. I would have been afraid to have students like that in my classroom if I would have not been introduced to the Laubach.... [The volunteer] can work individually with the Laubach student while I can go on and do other things with the people that can read."

Even at higher levels of reading skills, volunteers are dependent upon materials. Schall describes her work with Level II ABE students: "They have to do the reading and then answer the questions in their reading program. And then we'll go over those answers again that they have answered either why they are wrong or what have you." The order in which math skills are taught also is dependent upon the book used. When explaining what she teaches, Hart uses the books for guidance as she uses phrases such as, "after we go into the long division, it goes into fractions." Robinson's description is similar: "With math, we use a series of books that goes from the very basic skills, all the way to algebra.... Once we've kind of determined the level, then we just sort of begin practicing with that book."

These instructors assert that they like the Laubach series because it is "step by step," "logical," "includes all the skills students need," and is sequenced so that the books are progressively more difficult. Witt, for example, attests, "I like [Laubach].... You start from the very beginning with the sounds and work into... vocabulary, and then the reading is set up that relates right back to the sounds and the words that you go over." Creech explains in more detail:

> There's five skill books.... You work on a lot of phonetics... taking the word and looking at the letters and saying this

> letter sounds like this, and this letter sounds like that and they put all the sounds together to read the words. ...It's terrific because they can apply it to other words that we don't work on in class and they can use it to read.

Creech's last comment illustrates two important points: volunteers believe that phonics is the way to approach reading skills and that phonics practice provides the foundation for reading skills, rather than providing opportunities for actual reading. For volunteers, phonics as it is approached through the specific program they are using has become the definition of "good" reading instruction and other systems are evaluated in these terms. Creech, for example, has examined "other people's methods of teaching," which are materials also commercially available that are less dependent on a strict phonics approach. She finds, "I don't like the way it's written, doesn't seem to be very logically put together as far as the skills... .They will throw long vowels with short vowels and... there doesn't seem to be anything very logically advancing for them. ..just sort of a bunch of words thrown in there." Creech admits that her evaluation is one-sided: "I don't even bother to use it because I don't like the way it looks."

Volunteers show a limited understanding of students' skills and the relationship between skills and "level." Reading skill appears to be conceptualized in the traditional subskill way in which reading consists of a hierarchy of discrete subskills which students somehow integrate in order to really "read." Testing determines the extent to which those skills already exist; students begin with materials which address the lowest skill on the hierarchy which they apparently do not already possess. A level, therefore, corresponds to a student's place on the hierarchy, or "achievement." Grade level equivalents are derived from the basal reading series used in elementary schools in which the introduction of new vocabulary and subskills are rigidly controlled according to the school grade and month of the school year. Thus, adult students can be identified as having a "third year, second month" reading level when tests appear to show that their skills correspond to those introduced in the elementary schools up to that point in a child's education. Instructors using Laubach translate grade levels into book levels, so students are described as, "starting in Book Two." Tickle explains, "When I say levels I'm thinking in terms of achievement levels -- grade level." She continues, "All of the teacher's materials are graded. You start off with Book One and you move from Book One to Book Two, etc."

In addition, it is important to note that materials are chosen solely on the basis of subskills, or level, and the content of the material plays no role. Therefore, another assumption implicit in the volunteers' approach to instruction is that content, which is related to the degree of student interest and background knowledge, is irrelevant to identification of a student's reading ability and to choice of appropriate instructional materials.

In only one case is there a clear exception to this last assumption. Alston teaches at a local factory. She visited the factory and learned about the jobs in which her students work. Then she took a commercially produced phonics series and adapted it for her class by replacing the series' words with words relevant to the factory employees. She is unusual among the volunteers because she created her own materials and related the content to students' lives. She still fits into the volunteers category, however, because the materials are modeled on phonics workbooks and once the materials were created there was no deviation:

> Immediately upon enrolling in the ABE classes at [the factory], I gave them the Wide Range Achievement Test, and where they sort of had difficulty or needed additional help, that's where I started with them.... I made up either a reading program or a math program and put them on that program and they would come in and work for so many allotted minutes... .Then they would come back the day after that and we would check the assignment and continue from there.

Alston assumes that content with high interest is related to motivation and not necessarily to the actual learning to read process.

Volunteers find problems with the Laubach series and other systems they use to teach introductory reading skills. Most prevalent is the fear that students will find the books demeaning and childish. Barrett introduced Laubach very carefully to her student:

> I told her straight up front: 'If these pictures bother you then we will think of something else,' I said, 'but this is the best way that I know to do this.' And she said, 'As long as it will help me read.' She doesn't care that she is using a kindergarten or first grade book... -- it's an adult education book. But it's still the same material that I would use for kindergarten and first graders.

Schall uses Laubach, but she feels that the content is not only childish but irrelevant to students' daily needs and interests: "I think you should have earlier things in there that they really need -- what they do everyday. Like start out with writing a check -- start out with things that they need day by day."

Another problem is that students appear to memorize the materials in the Laubach books, making it difficult to assess the extent to which the lessons have been learned. Parker explains, "They'll memorize a lot of things, you know, so when you're working with them they're memorizing the words. So we use another book -- then you will find whether they know that word or whether they've remembered that." Many instructors use supplementary materials provided by Laubach while others develop additional materials. Kubel, for example, explains her approach:

> I've found, on those Laubach books, that sometimes the students can almost memorize the work, so what I like to do is take some of those same vocabulary words, I've made cards, and even just switched the sentences around to see if they could use them, or used the same lesson, say, for short A sound and then made out some simple sentences using that same sound,

> though, but with different sentences.

Kubel also has created a "Phonics Bingo" game; Crowder brings in "my little nephews' and nieces' materials that I have at home -- like coloring books with the alphabet and they have the little stories below them." This use of children's books is not unusual among volunteers; Kubel explains: "Most of those books over there are books that I got, and they're children's books; but if you don't have anything else to do, you know, you scrounge and do the best you can."

Supplementary materials simply provide additional practice rather than an alternative approach to teaching the skills. This is particularly clear when Hart describes her approach to teaching math in ABE: "I follow that book along, and when I see that someone's having problems, there are other, some added type worksheets, and I give them those, and if I see them having trouble with long division, I give them extra work. They have other problems other than what's in this particular book."

The volunteers also appear to assume that beginning reading instruction must be provided on a one-to-one basis with students; in other words, each student requires his or her own instructor. Volunteers do not seem to realize that Laubach materials are written specifically to be used in on-to-one tutoring situations, and that the organization of the materials appears to have defined the instructors' approach to the management of reading instruction. ABE is organized on a group basis and classrooms usually have students who are working at a range of levels; when some students in a group are at "Laubach" level, instructors experience conflicts when allocating their time. Rudd explains how she works it out:

> If they're a non-reader or a terribly low level reader, they've got to have a tutor.... I either have the tutor come to my class or take a student out into another room -- we have a room available and we can use it if we want to -- and read with them and work with them because of two of us as teachers are trying to keep a whole class going. Unless we have a very small group that day it's really hard to find the time to take a student off for, say, an hour's worth of reading without neglecting the others.

As students' skills levels increase volunteers begin to identify a role for content when choosing materials. They believe that Level II skills are basically related to building vocabulary and practicing reading, so they attempt to find materials of interest to students. Rudd, for example, describes her experience with Level II ABE materials:

> I've had the worst trouble with the consumer-type reading which all of us I think would think, 'Oh, great, this will give the student some valuable information and also help in their reading.' Sometimes the middle-aged students will get into that better but the younger students, it just bores them to death. We have another series for them... Superstars.... If I can't get them with the Jamestown Classics or with the

Superstars, I know I'm in bad trouble.

Instructors categorized as volunteers can be very successful as long as they are working with students who are able to learn with the specific method being used by the instructor. When instructors are confronted with students who do not appear to be able to learn this way, they have few resources for analyzing the problem or developing alternative approaches. Hart, for example, is frustrated with a student who does not appear to be making any progress; her analysis is superficial ("His concentration level, I guess, is not what it should be") and does not examine her instructional approach or the student's learning style. Creech describes those who do not learn using Laubach as "very low I.Q. students" and she responds to their problems with "double-work -- reworking the same stuff over and over again." Creech admits that a student in this category "might have had some other problems that I could not deal with. You know, he might have been dyslexic, for all I know. He did a lot of things backwards which kind of led me to wonder if the signals weren't getting to the brain in quite the right order for him."

Volunteers tend to group students who are unable to progress with a rigid phonics approach as "learning disabled" and "low I.Q." rather than questioning whether they may be of average intelligence but simply need to learn to read using an alternative approach. This reflects the instructors' lack of training in adult reading instruction as well as in learning disabilities. Wren, a former instructor, explains his discomfort:

> We're working with people with educational handicaps and to be honest with you, because I don't have the background in learning disabilities, I was really at a loss. I mean, you just sort of felt that you were doing the same things over and over again.... Now the other folks who were coming in, you know, working on a middle grade level, what you would call normal I.Q., you could move them up fairly quickly, you could get them into a GED class. But some of the people that came in with very much beginning readers, we had some of the same people the whole two years I was there. And making, I don't know, I guess they were making some progress.... When you do the same thing over and over, and you see very little progress, I've just not been geared -- I don't really have that much training in learning disabilities.

Instructional Materials as Tools

Trainers talk about reading instruction in terms of skills rather than books, and they use books as tools to support their efforts with students. Trainers also tend to approach reading instruction from a subskill perspective, but they have their own understanding of the hierarchy of skills, separate from that which may be incorporated into a specific book series. In addition, trainers look for books that will support the way they want to teach, rather than feeling constrained by a book's approach. Finally, trainers appear to assume that flexibility is important, even within the constraints of a subskill approach. When students appear to be unable to learn phonetically, trainers proceed with an alternative whole word method.

Goodman, for example, begins with phonics instruction:

> We start with consonants, we go to short vowels, long vowels, blends. We just build up with that. When they start to know their blends, and what a short vowel is, ...we start with some simple spelling lists.... Then we build up to bigger words, the farther they go. And work digraphs, and more complex words. All the while we're reading, so they're learning what new words are and you just slowly build them up. They start from the very basic, learning their consonant sounds. Once you get the vowels, you can just kind of cement words together.

Rather than depending on Laubach, Goodman uses a variety of materials, including books she brings in from the library. She finds that Laubach does not meet her needs as a classroom teacher:

> It's good if you have one student that you can stay with. That's what it's really set up for, one to one tutoring, but [not] when you have maybe five or six people on five or six different levels. And to me, it's so babyish... and it's insulting to a reader, too.... You have to sit right there and be right with them, and it's so structured, and it doesn't fit everybody. It fits some people, it's a good progressive vowel sound. You know, it really stresses, 'You work on short "a" on this lesson.' But there's other phonics books that I find more flexible... and I can say, here's two pages, this is what you're doing. You're going to look at the picture and figure out what consonant sound that begins with, and then he can do his two pages and work alone, and I'm not sitting there.... Laubach really takes one to one.

Calder also does not view his teaching in terms of books. He explains,

> I use books more or less for security because when I'm teaching in my classroom, very seldom do I use books. I use homemade materials.... I use books for security because a student wants a book. They want people to know they're in school and if they've got children that are in school, they've got to have a book. But I don't use that many books in my classroom. It's more or less like a security type thing -- a supplementary type thing.

Calder has used Laubach and comments, "Laubach is just one method. I'm not so much sold on it but I have seen it work and I have seen it not work." Calder also believes that the students as well as instructors must find a book useful so, "I may give [a student] two books, three books, four books. I'll say, 'Take your time and look through these books and read through some of this and tell me which book you would prefer a person to work in.'"

Phelps believes that Laubach is most useful for new instructors with minimal training: "With an inexperienced person I would say if you have the Laubach method, if you want to feel safe in helping an individual, follow the plan and then add whatever you can." She uses Laubach as a base, but adapts it, based upon her knowledge and experience: "I think it's very important even in the first book, even though the method does not do this, is for the people to begin writing a sentence in book one other than just wait and go through all of book two." In addition, Phelps assists her students in immediately applying what they have learned to their daily tasks. She provides an example: "One thing they can do is learn how to make a grocery list and just spell simple words like bread and eggs and so on, you know, the very simplest grocery list."

Volunteers identify the limits of Laubach as limits of the ABE program, while trainers create and find alternatives and supplements to Laubach based upon the assumption that some adults are unable to learn phonetically and that some adults will progress through paths that differ from those of other students. Miles, for example, finds that Laubach just is not appropriate for some of her students:

> It's a very simple method of working. It's certainly not difficult to work with. I've tried it on about three of my lower functioning people -- they love it. But I could see very little progress made, you know. For instance, I have one or two, maybe, that I can work really well with phonics but the majority of them, they just do not take it in any at all.

McDonald concurs: "Some [students] can use different techniques, and I just try to hunt and see which one [works]." McDonald uses Laubach but quickly adds: "I've used anything that is available."

Mitchell adapted Laubach at the beginning of the quarter with a group of students who were starting on similar levels. Now, she explains, "I have one student that's further ahead in Laubach than any of my other students. So basically instead of taking that student back I try to not use the Laubach so much." She encourages students to work independently, if they can, but with the entire class she uses materials better geared to group work: "We work on a lot of vocabulary and we do spelling.... And we work on writing sentences- we work on writing paragraphs."

East also works from, but is not limited to or by, a text in her ESL classroom: "We do have a central text and I supplement it with pronunciation exercises, idioms, vocabulary of the day, whatever comes up, we went through all the Olympic events, all the names so that people would at least know what they were and what they meant." East explains: "I have a picture file, I have pictures that I use that I've collected over the years from magazines and glued on stronger paper.... I teach a lot of survival English. So it's using menus from restaurants, it's using magazines, newspapers." Moss concurs: "I don't lock myself into any particular book or any set pattern of my teaching." She chooses from a wide variety of materials and right now is designing a writing course for ESL. She asserts: "Laubach is a good phase of an overall program, but not the total." Newton uses the Laubach ESL series; he also only uses those parts which are appropriate for specific students: "The speaking part of it seems to work pretty good," but he does not use the writing instruction.

Instruction in math follows a similar pattern. Where volunteers depend upon a series of workbooks, trainers improvise, create and adapt materials for specific students. Clark uses the electric bill, calendars, grocery store newspaper ads, and the telephone book to teach math skills. Students are encouraged to bring in materials around which Clark designs lessons. Skills are taught in their "real world" context.

Many trainers were, or are, elementary school teachers and they use materials from that context when they feel that there is a need for an alternative to the materials available through the program. They are not simply seeking additional drill materials, like the volunteers, but materials that approach specific skills in ways that are more consistent with the students' or the instructors' strengths. Mills, for example, explains, "I found when I was teaching third grade and second grade, that I could use a lot of the material that I had there with some of the slower students, and it worked real well.... [I could] get my materials that best suited me." Goodman concurs: "I had a lot of materials left from teaching that I'd take in if there wasn't something that quite filled the spot that this person needed."

It should be clear that trainers often use a wide range of commercially produced materials, with a flexibility not found among the volunteers. Brock, for example, chooses from among a variety of materials on the basis of her ongoing diagnosis of students' abilities. She asks students to try some reading and,

> as they're reading I can tell... whether they need to know initial sounds and whether they need to know blends.... Mine has come from a matter of experience, I guess, working with students and knowing what to do and then building up.... I've built up quite a bit of materials and supplies, so I know what I've got and I can pull this out, 'Turn to page so-and-so in this book and another page in the other.'

In addition, trainers emphasize the importance of interesting and meaningful content; Brock continues: "I try to find out what they're interested in and I try to bring it on the level where they can succeed. We have not only the workbooks and the materials but we also have tapes." Even when the level and content are deemed appropriate, every aspect of a book is evaluated:

> Some books that I have, I like very much for the reading. But then when they ask the questions, I'll just say, Question No. 1 or Question No. 2 and find out because they ask questions that are too complicated or too hard for the people that I'm working with. It's still according to the person, whether I can use these series of questions with this book. (Brock)

When trainers are confronted with students who do not appear to learn phonetically they use an alternative: the sight word, or whole word approach. They do not group these students as "learning disabled" or "low I.Q.", but consider this an expected range of diversity among persons learning how to read. Brock explains, "There are those who cannot be taught the sounds of words and it would be the biggest waste of time... because of the way they hear; some people don't have that sense that they can learn to read using the phonic method." She believes that instructors have to understand the reading process if they are to be effective with the range of students in ABE programs: "If you don't know the mechanics of teaching reading, you're not going to be able to help [some students] learn to read."

Brock uses a list of 300 often-used words as a sight vocabulary goal with beginning readers rather than continuing to repeat phonics instruction. Mills also uses whole words as an alternative to phonics: "Some you can start with phonetic reading, but some ...cannot hear those sounds and ...had to read by sight." Clark, in math, uses different sensory modalities with students who seem to have trouble learning simply from the workbooks: "We have two math books... but when I find out a student cannot follow those, then I gear off and go in the direction I think is important for them.... We do the finger method, we use calculators, we use tape recorders, we use a lot of different methods."

Goodman has a degree in special education and is particularly able to assist students who appear unable to learn using rigid phonic instructional systems. She describes her experience: "I get adults that are learning disabled, and they just quit school because thirty years ago they didn't know what that was, [and] they were just labelled stupid. When they come back, and I can show them different ways maybe to compensate for problems that they're having, they learn to read." Interestingly, instructors who have specific training with learning disabilities and those who approach reading instruction with a repertoire of methods and materials report far fewer learning disabled adults in their classes than do those instructors who have a more limited and rigid approach to teaching reading.

APPROACHES TO INDIVIDUALIZED LEARNING

Instructors

Some ABE students work with an instructor in a learning lab, but most are in classrooms with anywhere from five to twenty students. Almost all classes have a pre-scheduled break time, but the rest of the schedule and process is decided by the instructor. All instructors try to create relaxed, warm learning environments and usually begin each class with informal conversation. They try to create opportunities for students socializing among themselves, through picnics and other activities outside class or simply provision of a coffee pot or a birthday cake during class.

Many instructors, volunteers and trainers, work with the entire group when they bring in speakers periodically or take their students on field trips. In addition, many instructors often bring current world news into the classroom for enrichment, engaging the entire class in discussion of current events and sometimes teaching the use of maps, charts and other visual aids. All instructors emphasize the importance of flexibility, since they cannot predict how many students will be in class on a particular day, what their range of levels may be, or what outside pressures the students may be experiencing that may interfere with class work.

Instructors classified as volunteers work almost entirely with separate individuals rather than with the entire group. Students have their own workbooks and the instructors move around the classroom answering questions, checking homework, explaining new lessons and providing support and encouragement. Robinson differentiates this arrangement from "teaching:" "It's mostly independent work on their part, and when they run into a problem that's when I step in and do some teaching with them." Some instructors group students whose levels are similar so that there is the possibility of addressing something to the group, but usually they work with separate individuals and grouping is simply a seating arrangement.

This mode of classroom organization creates problems for those students who are at the lowest end of the level hierarchy, since the materials they use tend to be created for tutorial situations in which a teacher is seated with the student. Therefore, as Schall explains, "You need to have someone individually working with the Laubach student while another teacher or the person in charge then works with the other ones.... They already know how to read -- the others." Wren felt that his lack of a teaching assistant made it impossible for him to respond to students who were at beginning reading levels: "I could not sit down with that one student and go back to them every five minutes. That was just impossible to do."

In this classroom model the instructor is always needed, always on the run among students. Many instructors agree with Schall that, "[The students] don't think they can do anything on their own. You need to be there and answer their questions." However, Hart has one student who does not fit this pattern, as she describes:

> [There is one student] that does not really want your help at all and we talk and she knows that I'm available to help if she runs into a problem at all, but for the most part she works individual study for herself. It's just her personality. She doesn't like to really be bothered. So I sort of let her alone, unless she asks a specific question, or I make sure she knows if there's any type of materials that she needs. You see, I'm more of a resource person for materials for her, than an actual person to sit down and go over what she's doing.

The instructor's movement around the classroom is intended to "give every student a little bit of special time" Kubel in addition to providing assistance. Since students essentially are interacting with print materials in order to learn, rather than interacting with other persons, the instructor's five or ten minutes per class is a touch of human contact that is deemed very important for students' self-concepts and developing social skills. Rudd explains that her class is

> like a study hall -- everybody sits at tables in one large room and the two teachers move around and help students if they need it and that kind of a setting doesn't give the students as much time to get acquainted with each other maybe as if they were all in discussions.... But it seems to be the best way to use our time.

She has tried to facilitate interaction: "We do have breaks at set times and in the winter we always have a big pot of hot water plugged in and have instant coffee and tea and hot chocolate, so at break time they'll often cluster around the coffee pot and talk and mix up their drinks and that gives them a little more chance to get acquainted."

This kind of highly individualized independent learning may be a consequence of the environment when instructors are working within an existing learning lab in the community college rather than in their own classrooms. Students from curriculum courses and developmental studies programs as well as ABE, GED and adult high school may come seeking assistance at the lab and instructors have no way of predicting attendance or grouping students. Most instructors classified as volunteers, however, are in classroom settings and some recognize that the dynamics in their classrooms are affected by their own lack of knowledge and training. Wren, for example, wanted to include more group activities but did not know how:

> We tried a few things where we had group participation, and I don't know whether I was doing it wrong, or just -- it didn't seem to work out real well. So you go back to what's working, and that was more of the individual type thing. Somehow in the back of my mind, I think, if you had the right approach, you could probably get a group type thing going on.

Instructors who are classified as trainers approach the problems of individualizing a multi-level classroom a bit more creatively. They work with small groups as well as with individuals, they use mediated instruction with some beginning readers so that the students can work relatively independently, and they encourage students to help each other more often. Mills, for example, explains that she, "let some listen to tapes and film strips with the reading with phonics. And then I tried to work with three or four on the same level at a time." Goodman adds:

> [These two students] have been there two years, and they just pick their books up and go right to it. And they even are to the point where they can help me with some of the slower people. Like if [a student] needs to be read aloud to, and I'm working with somebody else, they'll do it -- which is a real boost for them, to be able to help somebody else read.

Thus, the wide range of levels that is a constant source of frustration to volunteers is a source of resources to trainers who can think more flexibly about the instructional process and can involve students in classroom management. Calder teaches in remote locations in which he frequently has GED as well as ABE students mixed in a single class. He explains his perspective:

> It's been my experience in working with these classes that it's good to have a wide range of people in that class, for your benefit and for the student's benefit. Because if I've got a class in there and I've got someone who's a non-reader, and I've got someone who's sitting over here working on 10th Grade level, this can be my biggest helper in that class. Students turn to him or her because you're constantly tied up because everybody wants your individual help.

Calder adds: "I always stress that in my classes -- student interaction." Thus, there may not be a teacher standing in the front of the room addressing the entire class but, as Cozart expresses, "there's [many] little group discussions going on."

Many trainers create "learning stations" around the room at each of which a small group of students will work for a period of time and then the groups will rotate. Calder explains the system: "I've had [students] to tell me, 'Don't give me a book and let me sit here and read it, I can do this at home; I come here to learn, teach me something.' So we honestly make an effort to teach." Calder continues:

> Let's say if I've got ten people in there, I'll try to pair them in groups. I go back to more or less like the open classroom conception.... I usually have activities set up.... Let's just take math for example, because that's more or less one of the easiest things to teach. I've got two people up here who can't divide and they're learning to divide and I've got a group working on fractions and I've got a group over here working on percents. I rotate them... I'll bring up the ones that are working on division -- I'll spend 30 minutes with them in front of the room on math. I'll rotate them from their math and let them go and practice some in their books. And I'll rotate the group up with fractions and spend approximately 30 minutes and then rotate them out and bring a group in on percentages. And we do basically the same thing in reading but we interact the students, you know, interact them together. I'll have a poor reader reading to a better reader. Or sometimes I'll maybe have a better reader and I'll give them a book and have a poor reader setting there with the same book. And let this person read his story and hopefully he can follow along... reading it to him.

Cleary also uses learning stations as well as "a sharing session a couple of times a week just to keep things together." She agrees with Calder's earlier comment that students still want their own books: "We do have film strips and things to help them along, which is good, but... I've found giving them their own workbook is what's important to them just so they can have something to write in.... To have a book of their own to some people is just, you know, a revelation." Sometimes Cleary's combined ABE and GED class is too large and diverse for her to handle alone; at those times she comments, "I still have a list of volunteers that will come into my class and help me with students when I have a full day which is very nice."

Trainers engage in whole group work more often than do volunteers. Mitchell, for example, does group exercises in vocabulary and writing, knowing that some students will be more advanced than others; she feels they each work to their ability: "The more sophisticated ones will write more difficult sentences and I'll have them write more sentences than the less able -- all they can do is write the words." She creates her own material as she attempts to address each student's level: "I do some board work and I do a lot of hand-out sheets." Clark works with an entire group that is at different levels also: "This morning I did a sheet on math and we all did it together. Now, some of them can get it and some of them can't but then we work them all out on the board and they can see what we are doing. We did that as a group together and then they worked individually." These instructors depend on student feedback and requests for assistance: "They're all adults. If they're having trouble... they'll say, 'I don't understand this'" (Goodman).

Trainers also discuss using the group discussion at the beginning of class to generate class material, while volunteers see discussion more as a social and information enrichment opportunity. Barker, for example, explains,

> We'd start off at the beginning of the class -- we'd talk about foreign events, it would be about fifteen or twenty minutes just group discussion because the students like to socialize and they felt a community spirit, I think. ...From that we would get some vocabulary words. ...Then they'd break up into smaller groups.

Sometimes the plan to break into groups is ignored when it becomes clear that the conversation is more useful. East, an ESL instructor responsible for teaching conversation skills, admits: "I know what I want to teach. I keep a plan book. But, like this morning, I wanted to finish lesson 8. We didn't even get two pages done in lesson 8. It was conversation all morning -- which is exactly what they need."

Since conversation skills are stressed in ESL more than in other ABE classes, ESL instructors sometimes use role playing and other interactive techniques. Moss explains, "The role playing helps each student come out of herself.... It gets the class involved with everybody. It's an icebreaker for the class and they get tickled at how each person has approached the same thing." Newton teaches ESL to migrant farmworkers who may be unaware of local laws. He also goes beyond traditional academic material:

> First of all, I do the no drinking laws and how to get along with the police and how not to break the laws within the state, driving and drinking.... We go over grocery lists with them and try to help them in selecting a place to shop, a grocery store that has their type of food, we cover that with them. And in one or two cases I have actually been to the grocery store with some of them, to do their shopping and looking for outdated food, looking for bargains and things of

this nature.

Trainers are more likely to try to challenge students and to push them to incorporate their developing reading skills into their daily lives. This is related to the increased relevance of the content taught by most trainers. Kubel, for example, explains:

> Sometimes they learn, they can read from a certain book, but then they are not conscious of reading signs or really using their head. They're not used to reading, so they don't read. For instance I had a student come to me and say, 'Help me get some coffee.' And she could not read, "coffee with cream," "coffee without cream," and I said, 'Well, let's see if you can read some of these words. Don't let me tell you what it says. You see if you can read it.' And this has happened several times where students want me to do it for them, but they are capable of doing some reading on their own, that they are not in the habit of doing.

Students

When students describe individual and group classroom work it is apparent that they look to their instructors constantly for guidance and direction for their studies. Packard's comment is typical: "We just come in and get our stuff and sit down and they explain to us what we're supposed to do." Some students describe their first class as the time they are "put in the right book," and they continue with that book -- and, often, the book series -- primarily on their own. Those students working with instructors who work with the whole class rather than with individuals simply come to class and find out what the instructor has planned for the day.

While some students take the classroom arrangement for granted, many analyze and evaluate its apparent assumptions and value for their own learning. Oates, for example, feels that it is "nice that you can work at your own speed, but some things I like about it and some things I don't." Students appreciate freedom from the stress of "keeping up with everybody else" as well as acceptance, regardless of the level on which they are learning. MacIntosh believes he "catches right on" to each new lesson, and finds the few minutes of the instructor's time quite adequate.

Many students, however, find that the independent mode of many classrooms has problematic as well as positive aspects. Mr. Tyson, for example, was upset because he felt the instructors did not "teach," but simply answered questions. This has raised questions in his mind about whether it is worth his time to attend class. Carradine agrees; he describes his last teacher:

> I would come in most times and I just take out my book and something that I know that I wasn't real good at, I'd just go over and start doing that, and then [the instructor would] walk by and say, 'Okay, you busy, that's okay, what you want to do is all right.' And I would do that and she would never say 'Do so-and-so' or 'Do this, do the other.' I said, 'Well,

> shoot, I might as well just stay home and study,' right.... When you come like that and just on your own, you didn't have any help, you didn't know whether you were right or wrong.

Marshall compares his present ESL class with a previous one: "If I skip one week I know I miss something she teach. When I went to some other nighttime class, I know I not miss anything, because not learn as group, we learn by the book. You just read the book with the teacher." In this class, with students at all different levels, Marshall values opportunities to "learn from the one higher than me.... I really don't know much about them, but I learn from them. That's why I keep come back." Jackson also finds the system of extensive independent work less than satisfactory: "[The instructors] come by, you know, and want you to read and they help you with it and they leave. You study that but I can't [always] figure it out."

Sanderson would like a more structured classroom; she is young and left the program after her initial enrollment. She feels, "It was just me, myself.... I wasn't ready for it." Now she is back and reflects on her prior experience:

> I don't see nothing they could change because you work at your own pace and don't have nobody constantly on your back and stuff, so I think that's a good part about it. Maybe I don't think that is a good part about it.... I think it should be like school [and] there should be somebody on your back [and] maybe you will learn more. That's what I think I needed..... You know, tell me...just pushing me...making me do it.

Some students would like additional individual attention; they view the use of tape recorders as a possible alternative. Mosely, for example, compares his learning needs with those of his wife who was in the GED program: "She would study with books and all, where I need someone to stay with me to learn me.... That or somebody gives me the right stuff to work with and a machine who would tell me a letter and what the letter sounds like." Forrest's thoughts are similar:

> I think I need a little special attention and I know in a program like this everybody that needs it can't get it, but I feel like if they had machines -- tape recorders -- if I had a list of words and the machine could spell out the words, you know, and break them down, it would help people a lot.

Kearns has come to the conclusion that the instructors are "doing the best they can." She explains her analysis:

> You know the one thing I thought of at the beginning was, why don't they have a class and go to the blackboard and teach like I remembered, like in school. They'd put it on the blackboard or they would spell it out and you'd go home and study and you'd go back the next day. Well, then they probably couldn't do that because everybody is maybe on a different level.

Carradine also understands that there are limits to what one instructor can do: "She had about twelve students in there and she really needed some help.... She couldn't get to the higher students." Maber, on the other hand, asserts that, "if there's any possible way that they could get more help over here" it would help the students on the lower levels for whom, he believes, "There just wasn't enough help in the long run for you." Royster would just like more time with an instructor; he does not care about the format: "About once an hour [the instructor will] come by and I'll read a couple of little stories to them.... I wouldn't mind having a little more time."

Students whose instructors encourage them to work with each other see themselves as sharing responsibility for the class. Penny, for example, explains: "[We] form groups to help each other; the slower ones, the faster ones, kind of help the others along. Instead of always asking the teacher the question, we asked some of us.... [This] keeps much of the load off the teacher so he could concentrate with everybody, just not one particular person." Shilling agrees: "Up here we're down to business and we know what we're here for. If [the instructor] happens to be busy and somebody setting beside you -- you know, you might help them a little bit if they need any help." Students also feel they have some responsibility for their own learning; as Forrest asserts: "If you don't say you don't understand [something], it's your own fault because [the instructor] takes the time."

READING AND THE LEARNING TO READ PROCESS

Students appear to have internalized a phonic, subskill model of the learning to read process that is consistent with the model possessed by the large majority of ABE instructors. When asked what they are learning at the moment, students often will respond with phrases such as, "We're working on the long u sound now." When students describe what they need to learn, Mosely's response is typical: "I got to start with vowels." He explains: "You got to learn the vowel sound before you can read. If you make your sounds so your letters come out, it will tell you the word." Students usually describe their progress in terms of a hierarchy of phonics subskills such as initial consonant sounds, vowels, consonant blends, and so on.

Phonic analysis can be learned and applied successfully by many ABE students. They often like learning to read through phonics because it provides them with a system they can use on their own to figure out unfamiliar words. Pierce, for example, explains: "I'm trying to get in some of the rules to try to figure out how to read by myself -- sounding out the words and finding the rules of various spelling techniques and stuff like that." Rains concurs that phonics rules are important:

> By you telling me the words, I don't get it -- I would forget the words, you know what I mean, like a large word or something -- I would forget it. If you tell me, I keep on reading; I'd just say the word and I'd keep on reading, but the next day or two I'd come to the word and I couldn't sound it out. I didn't know how to sound it out.

Now he is learning, although with some difficulty, "short and long vowels -- then I got into double vowels." George also uses his knowledge of rules; when he comes to an unfamiliar word, he says, "I have to break it down in syllables and stuff and then I can read it." Detre claims to have problems "learning how to pronounce my words" but now, with the development of phonics skills, she believes, "I can now look at the word and figure it out a lot better."

When students encounter difficulties making progress in learning to read, some attribute it to programmatic factors, but most cite their own apparent inability to learn. These students discuss their learning problems in terms of an inability to "hear the sounds," reflecting the extent to which the students appear to evaluate their ability to learn in terms of the subskills model. Jackson, for example, describes: "I'll tell you where it's hard at, for me, to pick up the sounds. The sounds is kindly hard. Some of the [sounds] I can't say what I should say, you know, like the "w" sound. I try to say them sounds that they teach me, and it's hard to say." Pandel has learned that he has trouble with a phonics approach to reading, but it also is clear that no one has offered him any alternative:

> That's something too that I want to put some effort into is learning [sounds].... I just don't hear words in syllables like most people do. I think that was part of my problem in grammar school when they were trying to teach you syllables and all this type stuff and even to today it's like somebody say, pen and pin, you know, like a pen you write with or a pin you pin something with. To me they both sound identically the same.

Some of the students who have trouble with phonics appear to be able to use context and to learn sight words. This approach to reading instruction, however, has not been legitimated by most instructors and the students, therefore, seem to experience a conflict between their pride in their existing abilities, their knowledge about themselves as learners and the messages they receive from their instructors about the "real" way to read. Pierce, for instance, has trouble with phonics and has developed a reading strategy on his own about which he is unsure: "I've been working on some of these ...fantasy novels and there are some words or some phrases that I don't understand in that so I basically skip over it -- read on and maybe I can catch what they're meaning as I read on. But I'm pretty sure that's not a good way of doing it."

Howard also seems to learn using sight words but, as a result of program participation, has devalued this ability:

> There's a lot that I thought I can read but I found out I couldn't. But, more or less from seeing it so much in memory, memorizing it -- I know what it looks like, you know. ...There's just a lot of things that come to me from seeing it over and over and I know it even though I can't read it, can't spell it.

He is not using his sight word ability but is working on "the different sounds of the words," using Laubach materials with great difficulty. Oates provides another example. He describes how he used to approach unfamiliar words: "It would take a long time. I'd read the words next to it and maybe if I didn't understand it then, I'd just go back over and over it." In ABE he is working on "the sounds and the vowels and the consonants" but he does not mention using context clues, one of his existing strengths and skills.

Some students are able to use a phonics approach successfully while others have great difficulty. All students, however, evaluate their progress and set their goals within the framework of this model, regardless of strategies they may have developed on their own using sight words and context clues. Students do not appear to be aware of alternative approaches to reading instruction or learning, and they devalue reading skills they have acquired which do not fit into the subskill model's framework.

Many students are able to reflect upon and articulate their understanding of the learning to read process and their personal relationship to the subskill model. However, there is no evidence from descriptions of the initial diagnostic and placement process that instructors attempt to solicit or use this information from students. Learning modality or approach is simply not relevant when learning to read is understood as being synonymous with the development of consecutive subskills. Therefore, student placement according to levels in a subskill hierarchy may seriously underestimate the actual reading ability of some students who are unable to read phonetically but have developed significant contextual and sight word skills. In addition, progress may be impeded through instruction that emphasizes students' weaknesses rather than their strengths.

Instructors' lack of specific professional preparation for ABE is most keenly felt in this area. Instructors sincerely attempt to provide accepting, warm learning environments, useful information and important emotional and psychological support within a context of flexibility and individualization. Yet, when it comes to the process of learning to read flexibility appears to vanish and one model predominates. Furthermore, only one way of approaching that model is used among instructors who are classified as volunteers. The consequences of this profound limitation are most obvious among the students who appear to be making no progress; they internalize the failure to learn and, in turn, are rewarded by their instructors for their fortitude.

IMPLICATIONS

The prevailing mode of ABE instruction in North Carolina -- independent student work with short periods of group interaction -- places enormous stress and multiple demands upon every instructor. Although instructors describe their work in terms that appear to be "student centered," since they emphasize individualizing every aspect of instruction, in reality classrooms are teacher-dominated, with largely isolated instructors struggling to meet a huge set of students' discrete academic, psychological and social needs. Instructors claim to value social interaction among students, yet their classrooms are organized in ways that encourage isolation and interaction primarily with the instructor.

Instructors' descriptions of their work with students underline the extent to which instructors are dependent upon their prior training; the usefulness of that training is limited when it has not addressed reading skills instruction, even though it may include an undergraduate degree in education. Training for public school teaching has not prepared these persons for the diversity of skills they find in their ABE classes, nor has it prepared them for working with adults whose skills do not correspond to elementary schooling levels and whose strengths may lie in being able to develop an understanding of their own learning process.

Instructors appear to share the common assumption that teaching reading to adults differs from teaching children only to the extent that the adult's "poor self-concept" must be taken into account and childish materials introduced sensitively. There is no evidence to suggest that ABE instructors in North Carolina believe that there are any technical skills or knowledge about teaching reading to adults that may influence their way of organizing or conducting instruction. Instructors do not appear to be aware that many of the testing instruments they use are inappropriate for adults since these tests, with the exception of the WRAT, as well as the grade level system itself, have been normed on child populations.

Instructors classified as volunteers may be successful with students who can learn phonetically; the determination attributed to students may relate more to their willingness to struggle with unsuitable materials and methods than to some necessary length of time required for progress. Instructors classified as trainers may be successful with a broader group of students, but these instructors still stop short of helping students develop insight into themselves as learners. None of the instructors interviewed for this study discuss helping students identify their pre-existing approach to learning as it has been developed through employment or other learning opportunities. Although students may be learning how to read in many of the classrooms described in this section, it is not clear to what extent they are being prepared or encouraged to be continuing lifelong learners within their own sociocultural contexts.

Students' ability to evaluate situations does not correspond to the prevailing concept of students as failures who are unable to cope and do not have a perspective on their needs and aspirations. Some students, in fact, feel that they are sharing responsibility for the class through peer tutoring. They understand some of the limits of independent, individualized classrooms in which there is a relatively high student - teacher ratio, and see themselves responding as mature adults trying to improve the situation for themselves and others. This, again, is in contrast to the largely therapeutic view of many instructors who encourage peer tutoring to enhance students' self-concepts.

SUMMARY

All ABE instructors are committed to individualized instruction; although each instructor implements it differently, two groups of instructors have been identified: the volunteers and the trainers. Volunteers rely on commercially available materials and instructional systems as their methods. When students are not successful with these systems volunteers have few resources for analyzing the problems or developing alternatives. Their classrooms are like "study halls" in which students work independently and the instructor moves among them to provide assistance. Volunteers believe that reading instruction must entail individual tutoring; this belief is related to the organization of the instructional materials.

Trainers use commercially available materials as tools to support their methods and provide security for students. When students are not successful with a phonic approach trainers are able to change to a sight word method, although they depend upon word lists developed for use with children. Trainers use small group and whole group instruction as well as independent work by students; they also encourage peer tutoring. Trainers choose materials on the basis of their knowledge of the skills students need to learn and the constraints of the classroom situation; they favor materials and media that free them from feeling responsible for individually tutoring each student in a class.

Students tend to accept the classroom organization, methods and processes as "the best that can be done," but maintain a critical attitude. All students feel that their instructors are sincerely concerned about them and trying to provide the best possible learning situation under often adverse circumstances. The highly independent mode of classroom instruction pleases some students while others have mixed or negative feelings about it. Some students would like additional individual attention while others would like more group-oriented activities. Some students enjoy the opportunities for social interaction while others feel that it interferes with their concentration and ability to learn. Generally, students appear to have some insight into their own learning styles; each individual uses this knowledge to enhance the program's effectiveness by manipulating the flexibility inherent in the situation.

Students appear to have internalized a phonics subskill model of the learning to read process, similar to that apparently held by instructors. This serves many students well but creates problems for those students unable to learn phonetically. Some of these students may be able to learn to read using an alternative model since they report abilities to use context cues extensively and to learn sight words. These approaches have not been legitimized or developed in the ABE program, however.

ABE instructors donate untold hours to fulfilling their responsibilities; with little or no training specific to their positions, they try to work with the resources at hand to respond to a bewildering array of pressures. Their dedication, motivation and commitment cannot be questioned. Their effectiveness appears to be limited by their lack of knowledge and skill specific to adult literacy education, however.

CHAPTER 8: INSTRUCTORS AND THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM -- "MAKING DO"

Instructors' backgrounds and approaches to classroom instruction have been explored in previous chapters. Instructors' approaches to instruction are only partly a product of their prior background and education; they also reflect the perspectives, assumptions and values of program administrators, the constraints and resources of the positions and the program model within which instructors must operate. Administrators' perspectives on hiring instructors are explored in this chapter. In addition, administrators', instructors' and students' perspectives on the definition of instructors' status in the program, the provision of training and education for instructors, and the availability of appropriate resources and materials are examined.

The instructional program clearly is of great concern to ABE administrators, but they appear to feel that they constantly are confronted with situational constraints that limit the extent to which they are in control of their programs. ABE directors struggle with multiple job responsibilities and limited funds, personnel and other resources. Although every director makes unique choices in response to their perceived constraints, the theme of "making do" and compensation runs throughout the data and analyses presented in this chapter. Mark's comment is typical: "We have to make whatever funds we get, do."

The issues also are consistent although directors respond to these issues in a variety of ways. Compensation is found in relation to hiring "qualified" instructors; providing supervision, training and support for instructors; following the progress of students; and evaluating instruction. Administrators believe they have made the best compromises possible, without really questioning the structures that create the necessity for compromise and compensation in the first place. Most importantly, directors do not appear to believe that their compensation limits the effectiveness of the program but, rather, that it enables the program's success in spite of obstacles.

These data and analyses are presented in some detail here because the focus of this report is the ABE instructional program. Therefore, it is important to understand the perspectives of administrators who hire, supervise, and reward instructors. It also is important to examine the relationship between the perspectives of administrators and their instructors in order to understand the implications of administrators' approaches to their responsibilities for the instructional program.

ADMINISTRATORS' PERSPECTIVES ON HIRING INSTRUCTORS

ABE administrative personnel have the major responsibility for hiring instructors and their definitions of the instructor's role, responsibilities and functions are consistent with those presented by the instructors in previous chapters. Foley's description is typical: "The teacher needs to be or to have a multi-faceted role. He or she needs to be, not only a teacher, but also a counselor and a friend.

You know, we act as a referral agency." Instructors in off-campus locations have added responsibilities: "I don't think we have one center where there's an ABE class... that has a center director. And so you see, the teacher plays a very important role in keeping things going" (Mark).

Administrators, similar to their instructors, value personality in a potential ABE instructor more than specific professional training. Seymour, for example, explains, "The major thing I look for is the personality of the instructor, the willingness to give as much as they have to give to these students. Someone who is obviously warm, caring, empathic, who can win the trust and affection of the students." Beebe elaborates: "I want them to be strong. I want them to have a thorough knowledge of the basic skills. I want them to have that kind of personality and to be able to set up rapport with the students and to keep them -- to be supportive of them." How can directors tell that potential instructors are warm and empathetic? Rakes' response is typical: "A lot is just by talking, if you talk long enough you can tell."

Prior Education, Training and Experience

Many directors require a bachelor's degree, but that criterion elicits as much controversy among administrative personnel as it does among instructors. Woodley, for example, is responsible for recruiting instructors and students and setting up neighborhood ABE classes. She comments that,

> A person in that community not certified [with a college degree] but qualified, can do more with the people they know than a person coming out from somewhere with a degree or from some university. You have the knowledge but you don't have the background as far as pulling it out from these people. A person in that community or a person that they know can hold them better. They can get down with them, you know, have them make it a fun thing.

Beebe believes that college-educated teachers sometimes have "an unrealistic expectation of their peer group age-wise." She claims that they might feel, "'I got mine the hard way, what are you doing out here that you don't already have yours'?" Rich, a program director, concurs. He comments,

> To me, the ideal ABE instructor -- I wouldn't ask them their academic credentials first. To me the very first thing I would say, do you have the empathy for this type of student. They have to be able to relate to the student before they can teach.... Instructors if they have empathy for the student and a basic understanding of what the job is, they can teach ABE students.

Every administrator provided an example, unsolicited, of an instructor previously or presently on the staff without college credentials who "had better rapport than an educated person" (Rich).

Westlin expands upon the subject of criteria for hiring instructors:

> I think the desire to help people is more important than a Bachelor's degree or a Master's degree or whatever, because without it you aren't going to get anywhere. And it's got to go beyond the classroom -- it's got to go beyond putting in these number of hours between this period and this period and getting paid X number of dollars. It's got to be an interest in people as people and I want to know what's going on with your family -- what's going on with your children -- I want to know who they are -- what ages they are -- whether they play sports in school and are they getting over the mumps and that type of thing. This is more important.

The reason that formal education is unnecessary is that materials can function as teaching methods; the volunteer category of instructors presented in a previous chapter is considered sufficient. Westlin continues: "I'd say anyone with a high school education probably could teach the lower grades of reading and writing and math. If they really use the Laubach or use the Cambridge, or whatever -- the books are almost self-instructional."

There is another group of directors and administrative personnel that feels strongly that a college education is important, as well as additional training in working with adults. They find that the practical demands of a situation may not support these criteria, however. McCroy, for example, is an ABE director and believes,

> The ideal situation is to use someone who is a qualified, certified, public school type teacher in the elementary grades, junior high level, in that area. That would be the ideal situation. The problem with meeting the ideal standard in all cases is that these folks just simply may not be available in a particular community at a particular time. So there have been cases where we have used folks that are not college graduates, are not trained teachers, after we have given them some assistance.

Denton, another director, concurs: "They should have an elementary education degree and be trained in teaching. And, further, they should have had training in adults, although very few have."

Denton finds that elementary school teachers sometimes have a problem teaching adults, however; he explains:

> The hardest thing about it I guess, is getting teachers who treat the adults as adults at all times.... The main thing is to realize that the adult, even though he may not be able to read and write well, he still has had experience of an adult so you don't talk down to that adult even though he may not be able to add or subtract. Your approach has to be different than if you were in a classroom with fifth graders.

Mark summarizes the problems he has had with elementary school teachers succinctly: "You come in as an elementary school teacher, and you've been dealing with kids, say for fifteen, twenty years, you have a tendency to treat [your students] like kids. And that turns them off."

Compensating with Apprenticeship and Materials

Directors try to find persons with some experience teaching adults, often as volunteers in the ABE program prior to their employment, regardless of prior educational attainment. Some directors will look for prior training in the Laubach method if that method is the program's primary approach to teaching nonliterate adults. When potential instructors have no experience teaching adults, some directors provide a "trial period." Rakes describes her approach:

> If they do have a four year college degree and have not had any previous experience working with adults, what I like to do is put them on a trial basis originally. I go over with the person step by step as to some of the procedures that I have used that have worked with me. They may not work for you but these are things that have worked for me. And a lot of times we have people who have taught just in public schools. The transition is quite new.

Other directors, such as Foley, try to place the new instructor in a class with a "veteran" instructor.

Administrators appear to recognize that many instructors depend upon their materials, and primarily upon the Laubach system, rather than upon professional skills and knowledge about the process of adult reading instruction. They see this situation as less than ideal, but as a necessary compromise with the "realities" of the world of adult basic education. For example, Denton believes that, "the ABE teacher has to be willing is to plan their lessons just like they would if they were teaching in the public schools." He continues,

> But you will find the tendency is to just go to the room and hit-and-miss, so to speak, you know. Now, we try to deal with that in the selection of the materials that we use, especially in reading and math. The series of books in use in those two areas helps you compensate for the busy teacher who doesn't have time to prepare for class.

McCroy expands upon the administrative perspective about the use of one system and set of materials -- Laubach -- for basic reading instruction:

> Many of [the instructors] may not know about another [system] because that's the only one they know of, to be frank, and that's primarily the one that we urge them to use and the one that we have had the training in.... Having materials that are appropriate for adults is part of the problem, and if each instructor used different materials, then we'd have a real problem stocking the book room and all that kind of thing. So

> from an administrative point of view, if you can pretty much standardize the materials as you use them, then it's much easier to control and to make sure you've got what you need as you start the classes and as you pick up new students.

A program's use of part time instructors combined with pressure to continually expand the program may lead to using untrained instructors even when training is offered on a regular basis. McCroy provides an orientation for new instructors every summer. However, "there are folks that are sometimes hired when we have just had it or it's going to be a while before we do it again" (McCroy). He is trying to double the number of classes held in neighborhood locations in the next six months; McCroy continues:

> Now by doing that we are going to be able to serve more people at more locations, but part of the problem is, with growth like that we're going to have some instructors that we're not going to train quite as well as we want to. We're going to have some that are going to need more support than maybe we can give them right now. Hopefully as we get all of this network of class sites and all in place, then we can go back around and do a second wave of upgrading the instructors.

This willingness to hire untrained classroom instructors who will use one particular system (that was not developed for use with groups or with students who cannot learn phonetically) may limit the effectiveness of the instructional program even though enrollment figures may increase. This is compounded by combining GED and ABE level students in one class, as illustrated by Lankler's response to the question, "What would the instructor do for that person that you said had completed just first grade?" He answers:

> That instructor in a class could not do a whole lot for that student. They would want to, and would like to, but no way. That's where we have to get either some other assistant, we'd call for help and take that person into a separate part of the room or if we have a place -- like in our class last night... .Those in ABE lower level are in the back room with a volunteer tutor.

They were using Laubach materials.

The use of untrained instructors also may compound diagnostic problems. Many directors seem to believe that there are many learning disabled students in their programs. Foley's comment is not unusual:

> One major problem that we're seeing, I expect that a lot of students except the very young ones who are coming to us who have reading problems are undiagnosed LD. When I was in school we never heard of that terminology. So all of this is a new discovery for us of why Johnny can't read. And we're not really equipped to cope with this problem.

Directors depend upon their instructors to identify learning disabled students, even though very few instructors have any training or education in that area. Some students who appear unable to learn may simply be unable to use the particular system an untrained instructor has adopted.

Of course, some directors are unwilling to allow dependence on Laubach or any other single system. Foley asserts: "You hear a lot about Laubach in North Carolina and other places. We think it is a good program but we think that it is not the one true answer to teaching reading." Foley, therefore, has developed an extensive array of resources for her instructors. She comments: "You couldn't believe the variety. We have a bookroom down stairs that I'll show you. I couldn't possibly tell you how many different titles we have.... There's no one certain book that's the book." Even so, compromise is seen as necessary: "[Some instructors are] so remote from the campus that coming up to get materials is near an impossibility" (Rakes).

Price, who is responsible for coordinating a learning center that serves ABE students, requires instructors to use a variety of methods and materials, although she knows they find it difficult. She comments,

> I think it's very difficult for most teachers to go into ABE, and that's where most ABE teachers come from, they were elementary school teachers or high school teachers, something like that, and they're used to having a textbook and following that textbook, and they've done that for years and years and years, and it's very difficult for them sometimes to use a multitude of sources. If the student doesn't learn it one way, well we use another way that we can approach it, and here's another way. It's sometimes difficult for them to coordinate all that and give the student sequence.

INSTRUCTORS' EMPLOYMENT STATUS

Administrators' Perspectives

It was suggested in previous chapters that the parttime and insecure nature of ABE instructors' employment undermines their motivation and willingness to take initiative for engaging in education relating to their work in ABE. Administrators appear to recognize this but feel that they have compensated for this lack of training by using materials that require instructors to have minimal technical skill and knowledge. The use of full time instructors may encourage more widespread professional preparation for ABE instructional responsibilities, but effective instruction is not considered a major problem by administrators.

Some administrators believe that full time instructors would be an asset to the program, as McCroy explains:

> If you were able to use primarily fulltime instructors, I think that would make you a better program. Sometimes you can't do that, and we certainly don't do that in each case; but that's a plus or our goal to work toward... because as they are able to give this their complete attention, then they

> learn more about teaching techniques for this group, they learn more about the materials, and they're just able to give a little better effort than someone who might just work a couple of nights a week.

Other directors, however, see ABE instruction as an opportunity for full time public school teachers to earn some extra money or "for a housewife who wants to keep her degree current, to get a little bit of extra spending money but not to commit herself fulltime" (Foley).

Instructors are chosen largely on the basis of their willingness to expend many extra hours recruiting, supporting and assisting students in areas other than reading and writing instruction. This is considered necessary for student retention. ABE directors essentially agree with instructors that instructors are asked to work many more hours than those for which they are paid. The use of full time instructors may promote professional preparation for the job, but it also means that the program may actually get less work done for the amount of money being paid to instructors. As Rakes explains, they already are getting "one hundred percent" from their part time instructors; full time instructors will require "full time payroll [and] full time benefits" for the same one hundred per cent effort.

There are a number of directors who prefer parttime to fulltime instructors. First, they have to pay less to parttime instructors, since benefits, preparation time and meeting attendance are not included. In addition, parttime instructors allow for greater flexibility when administrators are not sure how many students will be enrolled each quarter, where classes will located or when they will be scheduled. In other words, many directors believe that parttime instructors are more cost effective and that they increase the program's flexibility, thereby enabling the program to better meet students' needs.

Instructors' Perspectives

Instructors' employment status is defined by their pay scale, the number of hours for which they are paid (parttime or fulltime), job security, and opportunities for mobility in the system. Although we found a range, the pay scale tends to be low and instructors are hourly employees paid for classroom contact hours only. The difficulty directors report in finding qualified instructors may be one consequence of this low pay level; Hoyt, an instructor, comments: "It's hard to get teachers -- one of the big reasons is the pay." East, another instructor, expands on the problem: "It's really wrong that I'm earning less than a garbage collector, and I have a Master's degree... and I've studied a lot." East claims that she could not afford to teach ABE if she weren't married to a man who is able to support her and to provide family benefits such as health insurance.

Programs primarily employ parttime instructors; while some instructors desire only parttime employment, as discussed in a previous chapter, others would like fulltime jobs. Regardless of their own personal preferences, many instructors believe that the program pays a high price for its dependence on parttime instructors and they reflect on the impact parttime employment has had on their own commitment to ABE. Merritt summarizes the issues when she comments: "There's not a great deal of dedication [among part time teachers] that you would have with a fulltime teacher or a teacher that had some future in the program perhaps."

The consequences of the almost total dependence on parttime instructors are complex, partly due to the existing definition of parttime employment. For example, instructors find that in order to meet the demands of their role definitions they must spend many hours preparing for class although that preparation time is not compensated; those negative feelings can lead to losing good instructors. Brock, whose experience and skill could provide guidance for many new instructors in her program, is thinking of leaving ABE. She comments,

> Right now I'm at a discouraging point. For this many years I've been happy, really. I don't make a whole lot but I enjoy home and this is the price I pay for working with ABE.... [But] we are not given any time for planning or preparing. Evidently we are expected to do that on our own time, which is not fair because the public school teachers are now given preparation time.

Parttime instructors who also have other fulltime jobs often are unable to attend meetings or to take advantage of training and education opportunities that may exist. Crowder, for instance, attests that, "having a full time job, it makes it sort of hard to go away to a town. On a fulltime basis that would be my first objective is to attend a convention or workshop." Hart also has a "nine to five job" and cannot attend daytime meetings. She was particularly upset when a large conference was held in her own town; she explains: "I would have liked to have gone to it, but I couldn't get off [work] to go." When she was able to attend a meeting last year, she comments, "That was really nice because you did get to see other people, other teachers, and you realize that your problems are not solo problems, or concerns." This last point is quite important, since instructors' extremely demanding role definition extracts a price. Wren comments, "[In] ABE, I think that you can get, I think there's--I'm gonna use this cliche--the burnout rate."

Part time instructors are not paid for the time they spend attending meetings, and this influences attendance. Goodman believes that her director is committed to providing opportunities for instructors to get together, but that attendance is low because "everybody's just so busy" with other things. Goodman continues, "And of course, you're not getting paid, and you know, I hire a babysitter cause my husband works nights, and I have to fix his dinner, and you know, the evening ends up costing me money and time. I know that sounds really ugly, but -- you know what I mean?" Kubel believes that this problem undermines the administrators' approach as well as instructors' motivation: "I think sometimes the administration is very apologetic about workshops. You know, 'We're going to have a workshop, and we'd like for you to come, but we know you're busy, and maybe you can come.'" Kubel feels, "I want to learn," however, and would like more workshops offered.

Part time employment also affects self-directed learning. Part time instructors with other full time employment tend to identify with their full time field. Coleston, for example, describes herself as "a Junior High School teacher" and sometimes will add "and I teach adults a couple of nights a week." When the demands of the full time job extend into discretionary time, they are met before time is allocated to ABE. Hart, for instance, has to pass a certification exam for her full time job. As a result, she explains "I don't have time to read [ABE professional literature]. I'm studying myself right now to be certified... so the only kind of reading I've done is that." Hart admits that, when it comes to her ABE teaching responsibilities, "All that I am familiar with is just what I have done."

The administrators' approach to program development leads to starting and discontinuing classes as the "demand" waxes and wanes in a geographic area or an organization. Thus, parttime instructors find their positions insecure and their possibilities for mobility in the system very limited. Brock explains,

> To be an ABE teacher there is no hope for any advancement. If you get your masters, you are no higher paid than if you don't. Even if you don't keep up your certificate, your pay is the same as if you keep up your certificate. If you've taught 6 years you are paid the same as if you just started, so there is no hope for advancement moneywise.

She continues, "I don't want to quit teaching ABE -- I like it. But there's no future in it. If you're content to work parttime and to not have to have the extra money- it's all right."

Kubel has been involved with ABE for a number of years. She reflects, "I have been hired and fired, I don't know how many times; and it's because usually the funds have run out. So I just kind of learned to roll with the punches and... I'm lucky in that I have a husband that supports me very well." When instructors lose their jobs or lose some hours -- part of their jobs -- they do not attribute this to the directors, but rather to circumstances beyond the director's control: loss of funds. Instructors usually are not involved in the decisions about what will be cut as a result of insufficient funds, but simply are informed in most cases, as Kubel reports: "We came one day at the beginning of the quarter, and there was a note on the door saying 'Your hours have been cut from twenty hours to four hours a week.'"

Of course, some instructors are dedicated to ABE and spend their own money and time attending conferences, maintaining membership in professional organizations and establishing a network of professional contacts in the field. These instructors are a minority, however, of the overall group of instructors. More often the lack of job security and lack of rewards for continuing education combine to influence attitudes similar to Kubel's: "One thing I haven't done is to take a lot of college courses. One thing is they are so expensive... and we have no job security here. I never know from one quarter to the next whether I'm going to have a job." In addition, instructors usually have to arrange for and pay a substitute for their ABE classes. Brock is upset that, "If I were having to rely on my salary, I couldn't afford to pay $15 or $20 for a workshop and then pay somebody to teach for me."

The potential contribution of those who require or desire full time jobs is limited by the staffing pattern of most ABE programs. Many instructors have left ABE now because, as Jellett comments, "I needed a full time job" and family responsibilities precluded an additional part time position. Others maintain two jobs although many feel similarly to Coleston: "I would have left public school teaching years ago if I knew I could get the hours with ABE." Alston now has left ABE because there was "not enough time in the classroom;" he enjoyed working in ABE and was sorry to leave, but "only six hours a week -- that really was not enough for me." Alston needed a part time job that would help him pay the bills rather than barely cover his expenses associated with the job.

Some instructors, such as Goodman, work in ABE until their children reach school age; at that point these adults desire full time positions and the inability of ABE to respond to that change in circumstances means that experienced and able instructors are lost to the system. Goodman explains: "Right now I'm applying to get back into the public school. I wish [ABE] could offer a full time position, where you could work on campus all day, having different classes, but I don't think that'll realistically happen, so I have my [public school] application in."

Students' Perspectives

Students find that constantly getting to know new instructors can create problems for their own learning. Most students who have been involved in the program more than one year can recite the procedure used by new instructors as a result of their experience changing sites and instructors numerous times. For example, Carradine has been in the program for seven years now. He is frustrated by the lack of continuity in instructors. Carradine explains what happens each time there is a new instructor:

> Say, for instance, like you are going to be our teacher from now on. Okay, you would have to know what class to put us in, right? So, what you'd do, you'd run us through a test-like, right? Give us a test-like to find out what you're qualified, what you can do and what you can't do.... And we usually start me off with that and the next student you would do the same thing. So, that way it would give you some idea where to start each student -- what class to start him in or what level to start him on.... So, every time we got a new teacher, we always go back and find out where we was standing, see. And we would start right back in the same low book and go on back up again.

Carradine feels that simply repeating the same lessons clearly is not in his best interests: "It seemed like to me it's just putting you that much further behind."

Carradine's issues also are related to the dependence on a phonics approach to teaching reading and the use of minimally trained instructors. Carradine's story raises questions about his actual progress in learning skills, even though he may have moved from one book to another with a previous instructor. Without continuity, new instructors may not recognize that Carradine appears to require an alternative approach to learning to read and he simply repeats the same patterns over and over again. Administrators appear to believe that simply "covering" a class is sufficient, and they will allocate their instructors according to the class scheduling needs. Instructors are dedicated to their students, but they do not see themselves as having any power in the scheduling process. Thus, enrollment figures may remain high and the deep and complex consequences of administrators' approach to instructors' status remain hidden among students whose lack of progress is simply attributed to "disabilities."

INSTRUCTOR TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Administrators' Perspectives

Administrators tend to place instructor training into the category of "It would be nice, but..." Many of the problems administrators encounter have been documented in previous sections, including lack of funds, disbursed instructors, inability to pay instructors for attending training, lack of time to plan training, and the lack of a framework for identifying appropriate training topics. Nonetheless, directors are responsible for providing ten hours of training per year for their instructors. They believe that their instructors will benefit from discussion of the nature of adult learners, since many have previous experience with elementary and secondary education. They also believe that instructors will benefit from simply getting together to talk, enlarging the notion of ABE as a "family" from the individual classroom to the entire instructor group.

Directors describe three basic purposes for in-service training: development of "comradeship" among instructors; development of instructional skills and knowledge; and instruction in administrative and record keeping procedures. Training usually is provided as discrete workshops unrelated to each other; although some programs manage to offer some workshops directly related to instructional skill and knowledge, most often in-service training focuses on record keeping procedures. Even when more diverse workshops are available, however, the effectiveness of in-service education must be questioned when it is not organized into a coherent professional development program. Directors describe the following types of activities provided as in-service training for their instructors:

meetings with publishers representatives;
workshops with representatives of local organizations that produce materials that might be appropriate for use in instruction, such as the local newspaper or utility company;
adult basic education teaching techniques and methods;
Laubach training by a certified Laubach trainer;
program policies, testing, record keeping and reporting;

swap shops (instructors sharing problems, methods and materials with each other);
reading and alternatives for teaching reading.

Administrators seem to try to employ instructors who they believe need a minimal amount of training, and materials which provide a "blueprint" for instruction further limit the training considered essential for instructors. Reporting procedures are seen as institution-specific (they cannot be taught in an elementary education college program); they also are the administrators' tangible evidence of an instructors' work as well as required in order for the administrators to fulfill their reporting obligations to their institutions and the state. Therefore, it is easy to understand the prevailing emphasis on record keeping procedures in in-service training programs.

The emphasis on record keeping is important for other reasons also. Records are viewed as necessary for meeting external reporting obligations rather than as documentation of the efforts, of the successes and failures, of instructors, students and programs. The only information administrators report actually using has to do with enrollment figures. Decisions are made about maintaining or closing individual program sites, about the apparent effectiveness of instructors and about the overall success of the ABE program on the basis of enrollment figures. Since record keeping is not placed in a broader context of documentation for the purpose of program improvement, it takes on the onus of a chore rather than the excitement of inquiry for learning. This may directly relate to the poor quality of data available on program efforts as well as to the emphasis placed on "making" instructors maintain their records.

Instructors' Perspectives

Instructors tend to speak positively of their directors and appear to believe that directors are doing the best they can with the resources available at the moment. Moss' comment is typical: "The administrator is for us 100%." Most instructors describe their program administrators as supportive and concerned, but limited by their multiple job responsibilities and financial resources. Instructors "love" their jobs but they still would like to see some changes. The major programmatic issue raised by instructors is the need for additional training and education. This is related to the fact that most instructors describe themselves as isolated -- from other instructors, from the program, or from the larger field of ABE. Instructor isolation not only may limit instructional effectiveness, but also limits the contribution instructors may make to the rest of their community college's program. Creech's comment that "I don't know about the college," is typical of off campus instructors, with rare exceptions.

Instructors speak at great length about the difficulties of being "thrown into" a new position with no preparation and quickly identify the need for training for new instructors. Hoyt offers one explanatory example: "Your English teachers that come in and teach, and they don't realize the big difference. They say, 'Oh well, I taught before,' and it's a shock when they get in the classroom and they try to teach the same way." In addition, training must be convenient; Hoyt teaches in a program that offers training once a year "and it is so rare, you have to kind of catch it inbetween."

Instructors routinely talk about a lack of supervision compounding their insecurities that result from lack of initial training. Miles, for example, comments, "I used to think that they didn't care what I did because they never checked up on me, not that I want someone looking over my shoulder all the time. I guess they just trust that I'm doing a good job.... I really don't know if what I'm doing is right or wrong. I would like to see some guidelines to go by." Cleary expands:

> The person that hired me didn't want me to have any contact with other instructors -- she wanted me to do it on my own, so all I had at the time were just GED manuals and I thought everybody would go into this GED manual. And I found out that a lot of people were on like third grade level or fourth grade level and so it was rough at first picking out materials and not having much help.
>
> And East is succinct: "One of the aspects of my job has been extreme isolation. I have had no peers, teachers to relate to.... And it's been rough."

Experienced instructors unanimously claim that they would like additional continuing education opportunities. For example, Creech received Laubach training before she started, and is aware of the limits of her training, particularly as she faces working with ABE II students this year. She comments, "Everything seems to be put together rather loosely for the adults.... They teach you how to approach the adult and that's it, [and] they don't do that above the fifth grade level.... After that, you're on your own." Moss expands on the limits of the Laubach training:

> We do have the Laubach training program but I think that's not the ultimate. I think we need to have other levels of approach in our teaching.... [In addition] I fluctuate from the high level to the low level and to the middle level, and some of the teachers coming into our program who are Laubach-trained need other areas of development, to make them better teachers.

It is important to note that some instructors believe that Laubach is the major source of training in North Carolina because it is available inexpensively through local educators who are certified Laubach trainers rather than because it meets the needs of instructors.

Some instructors are frustrated with the procedural nature of many local workshops; Schall considers herself a "good" teacher but explains that she would like workshops to cover "not just what the paperwork -- what you fill out and sign and turn in at such and such a time.... Because you get in a rut." She understands that, "we have new ideas" and would like workshops in which new ideas and approaches are shared. Witt also emphasizes that their annual workshop is useful, but she is concerned about ongoing continuing education "to find out what methods or what changes that have developed." Cozart echoes these sentiments when she says, "There just have to be really good ideas out there but we never get together to share them. So, a lot of times, you are just fumbling."

In some programs, instructors on campus work together sharing their knowledge and ideas, and some directors send regular newsletters to their instructors informing them about new materials or ideas. Some directors visit classrooms regularly, observe instruction and assist their instructors to the best of their abilities. The instructors appreciate this support, but still would like access to the experience and ideas of others in the state and in the nation. Crowder, for example, is appreciative of the effort her director makes to maintain contact and share information and new materials. However, she comments, "A lot of times I feel like I would like to just participate more in workshops and conventions." Brock adds: "To keep abreast of what's going on."

At first glance, it may appear that this information contradicts our earlier assessment that instructors are not concerned with professional development and do not see additional training and education as necessary for their positions in ABE. It is important to recognize that the strong feelings expressed in this section are taken out of context; instructors appear to believe that their personalities and willingness to work 24 hours a day are the most salient factors in meeting the needs of students. In addition, they would like additional training and education and an improved status in the program. However, they do not necessarily believe that the program would be unable to be "successful" without such changes. Training and education still are seen as relatively tangential to the program's ability to meet the needs of students. Those instructors for whom these concerns are central either use their own money and time to attend workshops or educational programs or, in the case of instructors who desire additional status, they leave ABE entirely. Thus, the program appears to suffer from a constant drain of experienced and dedicated personnel as well as a diminished ability to provide effective instruction.

PROCURING INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM RESOURCES

Administrators' Perspectives

Most ABE directors claim that they have the support of their institutional administration and, therefore, access to resources for their ABE programs. Mark, for example, comments: "If they need a tape recorder, or a projector, they need film or a film strip... or anything that would help.... We could go right over here and draw upon it. The library, we have free access, all our students, all our teachers. If we need anything, anywhere, we can get it." Mark continues: "We provide books for ABE free and there's not a dime that a student has to pay for anything, except for perhaps their transportation." Rakes concurs: "I think we have very good support with administrators here within our local institutions." She continues, "If I have a problem I could always go as easily to my presidents office as I can to my supervisor's office."

Denton, however, feels that deeds speak better than words:

> I go to all the ABE meetings, and there are some presidents that always are there... and now other presidents who have never been to an ABE conference or show any interest -- yet if they were to get on television today, they would say that ABE is their top priority. Now when you go over here and see how our students are crowded in some little rooms, you will see where the top priority is. See, we ought to have a self contained unit where we have all our materials.... [I've asked for] an area that's set aside just for ABE, but they're not going to do it.

Rakes admits that "at one time we had a problem with material" due to inadequate funds, but those problems now are seen as belonging to the past rather than the present. ABE directors all claim that they are providing the resources needed to support the ABE program, through their own budgets or through the community college within which they operate. Those directors whose instructors depend on Laubach feel that the provision of Laubach materials satisfies their obligation to the instructors and students.

Instructors' Perspectives

Instructors' perspectives on these issues are a bit more complex. Some instructors describe access to extensive instructional materials, but limited opportunities to participate in the decisions about procuring materials. As a result, they are frustrated by access to storerooms of books that do not meet their needs. Other instructors are quite satisfied with the availability of materials, and appreciative of their directors' efforts to maintain an up-to-date collection. In some cases instructors report that they have the freedom to order whatever they think they need, but they feel that they do not have the training they need to make good decisions.

Many more instructors describe difficulties with procuring adequate and appropriate materials, however. Kubel, for example, comments: "I haven't been a fighter much, but I'm about to the point now where I'm really ready to fight for what I want.... They have supplied us with the Laubach materials... [but] we really need money to purchase books." Clark provides additional insight: "We can use the tape recorders and the camera equipment and the movie equipment and all that, but I'd say [we need] more resource material... more things that we could have available for our students."

Instructors respond to this problem by spending their own money for books and supplies and by procuring donations of materials whenever possible. Kubel's report is typical:

> I have spent my own money. The calculators are my calculators. I've bought tapes for them out of my own money. I've bought books for them. ... I've been to the warehouse for

> the public schools and gotten free books that way.... A lot of the books that I have I have borrowed from [the local Literacy Council] and they let me keep them in the classroom. Our dictionaries were books that were going to be thrown away. So, we've just kind of done the best we could with what we have.

Clark adds: "We ask the student to bring things, paper and pencils, and then if they don't have it, we supply it.... They don't have money for the paper so we... write on the back of scrap paper."

The difference between administrators' and instructors' perspectives about the availability of resources probably does not reflect any intentional miscommunication between directors and their instructors. Rather, it seems to reflect the isolation of many instructors as well as their prevailing view that ABE programs basically are unstable and financially insecure. Kubel, for instance, reports: "Our boss has said that in order to have a program, we need teachers. So [the director] has taken all the money so that we can have a program to have teachers, and we've just sort of had to scrounge to get the books." Clark has come to a similar conclusion: "I buy all these books.... Since I've been here, I've never seen that we have the materials so I just go to the school supply place and look for some myself. I've just always been under the opinion that we don't have that much money."

It also appears that administrators are not necessarily aware of the extent to which instructors are using their own money to buy materials. Instructors seem to consider it a requirement of their jobs and, seeing their own jobs as insecure, they are slow to place monetary demands on their administrators. In addition, it is the rare program in which there is a constant open channel of communication between instructors and administrators rather than simply a mechanism for passing memoranda and reports back and forth.

Students' Perspectives

Students support instructors' assessment that materials and resources are badly needed for the programs. Students also raised the question of the possibility of providing computer assisted instruction as an alternative. Oates, for example, believes, "If they had computers over there to work with some people individually, it would be better for myself." Jones comments, "I feel like, books, we need more books and computers and things, to help us to learn how to read." And Pandel is quite frustrated with his program's policy that books are a scarce commodity and not to be taken from the classroom: "I wish they would ...let me take some stuff home to study because... I've got somebody willing to help me if I could just take the program home with me."

IMPLICATIONS: "MAKING DO"

To some extent, the perspective of compensation appears to be realistic. ABE programs are indeed serving the needs of many adults as a result of the flexibility and dedication of the administrators.

However, the language of compensation also obscures a deeper reality. The concept of compensation implies some standard against which decisions are evaluated. When the standard cannot be achieved, according to the individual administrators' perspective, alternatives are weighed and a compromise course of action decided upon. It is the standard which needs to be examined here. ABE directors do not appear to have a "vision" of the future of ABE that encompasses broad program development, change, learning, growth and community collaboration. Rather, there appears to be a more static notion that relates to the findings of the last chapter: multiply the existing program as often and in as many places as possible. It is this standard that will limit the ability of ABE programs to meet the needs of students, rather than the need to compensate for limited resources.

The need for compromise always will exist. The framework within which compromises are made, however, can change. Administrators are limited by their training and background in ways similar to the limitations of instructors. They must be provided with training and education that assists them in developing a vision for the future of ABE that goes beyond the boundaries of their individual campuses and county responsibilities to encompass broader notions of what adult basic education could be for the citizens of North Carolina.

SUMMARY

ABE administrative personnel are deeply concerned about the instructors and the instructional program. They prefer employing instructors who have a college education and some experience working with adults. When unable to identify persons with these qualifications, they will employ instructors who have the desired personality characteristics and commitment to ABE and will try to provide some apprenticeship or training experience to assist these new instructors. Many times this training cannot be scheduled in a timely manner; in these cases many directors depend on the use of materials that require minimal training.

Some ABE directors employ or would like to employ at least a few fulltime instructors. Most ABE directors, however, believe that parttime instructors are more cost effective and enable greater program flexibility. Instructors, on the other hand, often resent the program's inability to pay them for preparation and training time. They find that the insecure nature of their positions as well as the lack of benefits undermines their commitment to continuing professional education and, at times, requires that they find other employment.

Administrators appear to believe that the program provides the resources needed by instructors, although administrators understand that some of the classroom facilities could be improved. Many instructors, however, spend their own money providing books and other materials for their students; they believe that the program has to choose between paying their salaries and providing instructional materials. Administrators do not appear to be aware of the extent to which instructors minimize their demands on the resources of the program.

The theme of "making do" runs through the administrators' perspectives on the instructional program. Their flexibility and willingness to compensate for situational constraints enables the program's operation. However, their apparently limited vision of ABE and acceptance of the "need" for certain compromises may, in the end, limit the ability of the ABE program to respond to those adults whose needs are not being met through the present program.

CHAPTER 9: THE LARGER PICTURE

Local ABE programs operate in an institutional and a state program context which influences the ways local program personnel view their efforts and assess their priorities. In this chapter, the context of the state ABE office is presented, with some analysis of the apparent relationship between the state and local program perspectives. Then the perspective of local institution presidents is presented, as well as the perspective of local directors and instructors. These sections focus on the role that these persons believe the state plays as well as the role they would like to see the state play in the future in relation to local ABE efforts.

THE STATE LEVEL CONTEXT

Change

The state level office responsible for adult basic education programs is best characterized by the terms flux and motion. During the time this study was being planned and conducted, the community college system president, vice president for the section responsible for ABE, and state director of ABE have changed. In addition, the funding formula for local ABE programs changed; the immediate past president of the system and the state legislature had started the wheels moving for an infusion of state funding into ABE which took effect during the same period that personnel were in flux. Thus, new personalities, new policies and new monies all are having an impact on the provision of adult basic education in North Carolina as this report is being written. The state coordinator of ABE -- the person responsible for the day to day management of ABE operations -- remains one of the few constants in this context of motion and change.

State Literacy Awareness Campaign: Defining Literacy

One of the immediate effects of the change in personnel and funding appears to be a renewed vigor at the state level in relation to adult basic education programs. The state has initiated a major literacy awareness campaign designed to increase public awareness, community involvement and student enrollment in adult literacy education. The campaign began with statewide meetings and media coverage and has continued through the efforts of local programs that have organized meetings of their local community leaders and mobilized their local media. The campaign also has attempted to enhance the coordination of efforts of related programs within the local community colleges, seeking to facilitate students' movement from ABE to GED and into the curriculum courses.

This effort is directed to increasing literacy at all levels. Emphasis has been focused on the formal relationships between programs in a school, rather than on the actual content of those programs. As Woodard explains, the staff is interested in "unifying the efforts of ABE with other programs that service the same kinds of students, or service students after we have finished with them; tying it all together. So that we will not have a segmentation of services that we offer." This has been labeled the "continuum," and is described as an effort to increase recruitment and mobility in the system, although state personnel recognize that they also must address the "quality" of programs at some point. It is interesting to note that the present record keeping procedures and the lack of adequate system-wide student follow up do not appear to allow the programs to generate student retention or additional schooling information with any reliability.

During the literacy awareness campaign, the ABE program has become synonymous with state-supported adult literacy education, although the relationship between literacy and basic education has not been explored deeply. Woodard views literacy as the ability to function in one's context as well as to have opportunities for mobility; "being able to function at a higher level, if I so desire." The concern, therefore, is not simply for ABE programs but for all the programs of the "continuum" which support the development of increasingly sophisticated literacy skills. This supports the notion prevailing at the local program level that ABE is the first step on a hierarchy rather than a continuation of an adult's lifelong learning involvement.

Funding and Record Keeping

In the past programs were funded primarily by federal dollars which were allocated on the basis of local census data. This year the state legislature authorized a changed to "FTE" or "curriculum level" funding, which means that programs will be allocated state funds in proportion to the numbers of students they actually serve. The formula is the same as that used for the regular curriculum courses offered in the community college. This is seen as an incentive for ABE programs, as Gower explains: "The incentive is there for the institution to generate money at the highest possible level of funding by getting as many students as they possibly can into ABE. It's really a carrot approach to the whole situation."

Policy making is seen as the prerogative of the federal government, the system president, the board and the state legislators, rather than the state office staff or local program administrators. The local and state levels both place importance upon record keeping as an administrative responsibility tied to meeting these external regulatory expectations rather than to program improvement. On the local program level, administrators feel they must respond to the requests of the state level personnel. At the state level, personnel feel they must respond to the requests of the federal personnel, community college board members and legislators who are "looking for numbers" (Evans). The importance of record keeping is enhanced with the change to FTE funding; programs now must be scrutinized by state FTE auditors who certify that the number of reported FTEs is legitimate. The FTE data are required for funding, but also are seen as important for showing the state legislators that ABE "deserves" the new funding level. FTE auditors now have been added to the ranks of those seen as having control over local programs rather than control being vested in local or even state program personnel.

The auditors do not feel that they are in control either, however. They claim that, "the North Carolina Administrative Code establishes regulations for reporting hours," and they simply follow those directions. When the acceptability of a class's categorization as ABE is in question, an auditor explains, "We have another staff and another division, in our financial division, the division that develops programs and so forth, that would be responsible for that. So they would make the determination. I'm an auditor, I'm not kind of involved with that process." Finally, the auditors believe that the WRAT is too difficult for use as a placement test, but recognize that the determination of an acceptable test rests with the ABE state office rather than with the auditors.

Record keeping is related to enrollment, funding, status and external demands rather than to issues of program development, quality or substance. Walker, one of the state FTE auditors, explains, "The whole system is based on numbers -- the more numbers, the more money. It's a quantity-based system." This encourages attention to simple enrollment figures rather than to more complex assessments of student satisfaction and progress. Therefore, even though Evans personally may believe that if a student "got what he wants," whatever that may be, "that's just as important as the person who... goes all the way through GED," he still feels constrained by his understanding of the perspectives of those in policy-making positions and attends to the figures. This reflects the concerns expressed by instructors and administrators in previous chapters. As one auditor admits: "They've been increasing ABE programs since the funding was changed, which is what the change was intended to do. I don't know about the success rate.... There may be more people enrolled but I'm not sure about how many are completing."

The impact of the change to curriculum level funding is only beginning to become apparent. Many persons agree that one of the intended consequences of the change to FTE funding is a desirable increase in fulltime staff in local programs. However, although an ABE program may generate additional funds for its institution now, those funds do not necessarily have to go to the ABE program. Thus, there has not yet been a noticeable increase in fulltime ABE staff personnel across the system, although some individual institutions have hired fulltime recruiters and some directors are allowed to spend more of their time on ABE. Gower understands that fulltime instructors are considered expensive, but she hopes that, "once we get accustomed to having [curriculum level funding], we may see a shift in that attitude."

One of the problems with this type of funding formula is that programs may elect to increase their numbers rapidly by serving those "easiest" to work with: students whose reading level is above the third or fourth grade level. Gower recognizes this potential problem and would like to see "differential funding to allow more dollars to be awarded to those programs that work with Level 1 students because we know that they are the most difficult to recruit, they are the most difficult to serve once you get them in a class." In addition, participant retention is quite important in this framework, since FTE numbers depend on a certain participation period for each student.

Thus, support services, such as counseling, transportation, childcare and individual tutoring with the use of volunteers assume a new importance for "keeping" students in the program. These services add expense to program operation, however, and are not yet widely available to students. Generally, state office personnel believe that the shift to FTE funding has enhanced the status of ABE within each institution.

Those at the state office are leery of depending totally upon the new funding level to create a lasting commitment to ABE. Woodard explains, "The emphasis now is that we're trying to push the whole moral obligation, the whole need for it, the increased participation in it, so that in the event someone says, 'You can no longer be FTE funded,' that there will be additional presidents then who say, 'Well, we're going to do it anyway.'" In addition, the state office is trying to encourage the development of community involvement in ABE so that local programs will feel that "they'll have at their fingertips some kind of backup system" (Woodard) in case the FTE funding is retracted. The hope is that communities will be aware of "what [ABE] can do for the community and will not allow the program to die."

The ABE "Family"

The theme of the ABE family, described by most ABE instructors, some students, and many directors, is continued in our data from the state level personnel. Gower, for example, comments: "We all try to look after each other and it's a very close knit family." This family feeling comes back to funding and record keeping once again. Gower explains that the funding process used to be competitive, based upon judgment of submitted proposals. Now, "They don't write proposals, they fill out applications -- just a very basic simple application." This has decreased the sense of competition among programs, according to Gower. In addition, Gower expands, "the annual data report that we require had just gotten out of hand." She furthered feelings of good will by revising the data form, decreasing the reporting responsibilities of local directors but also reinforcing an understanding of reporting as something divorced from substantive program issues. In a sense, Gower sees this "family" feeling as having been forged through the years of scarce funding as she explains: "The fact that we have all struggled through for the last few years has made us strong -- it has made us want to stay together."

Isolation vs. Autonomy

The isolation experienced by instructors was mirrored, in some ways, by the inability of administrators to describe their programs in relation to other programs in a previous chapter. That same issue is reflected at the state level in terms of individual program autonomy and statewide uniqueness. The state level views each program as relatively unique and autonomous, similar to the way each program tends to view itself. Gower explains: "We like to allow our programs to run their programs at the local level the way they feel they need to run it because of their own peculiarities in a particular area."

On a statewide basis, North Carolina's program is viewed as unique since it is operated through the community college system rather than the public schools and, as such, the view of what may be learned from other states is limited. Gower, for example, describes her perspective:

> There are lots of good things that can be learned from other states and certainly we've picked up some things from time to time but I think we're special -- I think we're doing a good job here. And I don't know that we need other states to come in and tell us how to do things when they're working in a total environment, [the public schools], that I just have some real problems with to begin with.... We need to broaden our horizons a bit I'm sure but for the time being we've got enough to keep us busy without getting involved with others at this point.

It appears that state personnel have difficulty differentiating between isolation and autonomy. Their disinterest in exploring the applicability of the lessons learned from ABE in other states may limit the effectiveness of the instructional program. ABE programs share many common issues, regardless of the delivery system, just like N.C.'s ABE programs share many issues even though each county is unique.

Identifying Problems and Special Projects

State personnel identify many of the same problems raised by instructors and administrators. These include the inability of programs to reimburse instructors for time they spend preparing for classes or attending in-service training and education; limited funds available for materials; limited funds available for conducting instructor training and education; lack of program visibility and broad institutional and community support; poor student follow up and support services; need for additional fulltime ABE directors; and, shared to a limited extent with local program personnel, a desire to see additional fulltime instructors in the local programs. State personnel also describe the need for instructors to assess the students' learning styles rather than simply identifying the "level" of learning; this concern differs from those we heard from local administrators. When discussing facilities the theme of "making do" surfaces among the state level personnel. Gower, for example, explains: "We sometimes have problems with the facilities because they are not in the most ideal settings but we have to use what we can use -- what is made available to us."

Those working on the state level are concerned about North Carolina's dependence on the Laubach system as the primary approach to basic literacy instruction. They would like to see more varied training provided for instructors as well as for administrators. They have begun this process by providing funds for each institution to send an instructor to the Southern Regional Conference this past summer. They hope to upgrade state conferences over the next year so that true professional development opportunities are made available to administrators as well as to instructors. Gower explains: "These folks are out there working hard. They need to have some kind of reward and reinforcement for the great jobs that they're doing. And I think this would be an opportunity to help them feel better about themselves and at the same time, expand themselves professionally."

Some relatively recent special projects created products that have become institutionalized, such as the compensatory education curriculum for mentally handicapped adults or the handbook for ABE instructors and administrators. Local program handbooks focus on administrative responsibilities of instructors. The state's handbook for instructors (developed as a special project) encourages an emphasis on instructors' personality characteristics and does not include information about different conceptual approaches to reading instruction. Many of the references to additional, more technical information, are now outdated. It is interesting to note that the handbook includes a caution against dependence on commercially produced materials which may become a "crutch" and a "recipe" (North Carolina Department of Community Colleges, 1981, p. 100). The handbook also claims that, "It cannot be assumed that persons with previous teaching experience will make good instructors of adults" (DCC, p. 102), and supports pre-service training for new instructors. However, there is no evidence that the state personnel consider these cautions equivalent to criteria for program evaluation.

Leadership

The state office's attention to form and structure, rather than to content and internal dynamics, is consistent with the instructors' and administrators' perspectives presented in earlier chapters. The instructors we classified as volunteers are concerned with movement from book to book; the local administrators are concerned with setting up classes and student movement on the hierarchy. Even with new personnel and policies, the state level issues appear to be consistent with those of personnel in the field. This should come as no surprise, since these issues are linked intimately to what has been referred to as "the numbers game," played in its various forms throughout the national field of adult basic education. "The numbers game" refers to the relationship between program viability -- funding -- and enrollment figures. State and local personnel are driven by concern for enrollment.

It is instructive to see the extent to which record keeping, funding, enrollment, and status appear to be intertwined at all levels in the system and appear to result in administrative rather than educationally-based decisions about program operation. It also is important to note that the state personnel discuss the impact of the change to FTE funding in terms of the opportunities created by increased funding, rather than examining the impact of their new roles as program monitors for the state. It simply may be too early for the full implications of FTE funding to be apparent.

The orientation to creating a family feeling is translated into a feeling of responsibility to be responsive to local requests rather than to initiate change. As Evans explains: "We make ourselves available anytime that [local directors] run into issues or concerns that they would like to invite us out to their institutions to address." This is similar to the local administrators' perspectives, in which they see themselves as reactive and responsive, concerned with creating good feelings and not totally in control of the direction of their programs.

The state provides some leadership for the local programs through the use of Special Projects funds; this is one area in which state personnel admit they have a responsibility to "set priorities." Special projects are funded every year, and are supposed to assist in addressing problems facing local programs, but we experienced extreme difficulty tracing previous special projects, their products or their documentation. There has been no effort to maintain information about previous special projects, and this appears to support the finding that the state office has seen itself historically as serving regulatory functions rather than as building a cumulative statewide effort.

Some special projects were briefly institutionalized while they lasted, such as the university consortium, the functional literacy project and the instructor cadres, but now they are disbanded and largely forgotten. This is unfortunate because these three projects in particular appear to have been efforts to address problems that continue to exist in the system, such as the need for instructor education, apprenticeship opportunities for new instructors and alternative program models. There is no longer any active coordination with the university system, as there was in the consortium plan of the past. This means that the state is not modeling the importance of professional, rather than simply programmatic, linkage. The existing linkage, primarily with North Carolina State University, is tenuous and does not involve direct local program relationships. By default, Laubach has become the major resource for instructor training and curriculum development. It appears that the system may have lost many of the lessons that may have been learned from these projects and is in danger of simply recreating the proverbial wheel.

THE PRESIDENTS' LEVEL

The community college presidents we interviewed reflect many of the attitudes, values and concerns seen at the local and the state levels. Primarily, they view adult basic education as the beginning of the educational hierarchy that is geared to employment and social mobility, as Ellis explains: "[ABE] underlies [students'] whole educational program and experience." In addition, Ellis continues: "It's simply to help them to get a job or to be able to support themselves." Ellis admits that, "Somehow people have been able to function... They can make their way without [reading and writing]. But I'm not sure that's all going to be true in the future." The presidents share a concern that, "It's great what we're doing, but we're not doing enough" (Ellis). They consider adult illiteracy as "society's problem, public schools, employers, all of us" and place the role of the community colleges in that broader framework. They all echo Wheaton's analysis: "The statistics I'm seeing these days is that we aren't gaining any at all now. They're dropping out still at a rate greater than we can reach them, so I think we still have a big responsibility to work with adults as far as ABE is concerned."

Presidents' evaluation of the program tends to be based on the numbers referred to so often by those at the state and local levels. For example, Thullen states his position concisely: "The bottom line I'm looking at is enrollment ....If the enrollment is up, I say, 'Well, we're getting them in here, I hope we're doing a good job.'" Wheaton expands: "We certainly look at the numbers of students we are able to attract, how many of them we can retain, how many of them can get high school diplomas when that is what they want to achieve." This comment again raises the issue that there is no way to ascertain the extent to which students move into the GED program, or the extent to which they want to.

Although the presidents certainly share the state and local personnel's perspective about the importance of funding and enrollment, they also raised questions about the quality of the instructional program. When looking at the future needs of ABE, Ellis asserts: "It isn't necessarily more money -- sometimes it's just ideas." He expands: "Innovative ideas, new approaches, imagination of some kind, in additional to what we're currently doing." This need for new ideas is connected to the need for training instructors. Conver believes that in order to be creative and effective, instructors "need some philosophical and specific training requirements such as how people learn, learning style and modes of instruction, background in motivational techniques."

The presidents we interviewed would like the state to provide leadership for increasing the effectiveness of their instructional programs. Conver explains: "We've had a lot of publicity, cheer leading, that sort of thing from the state, but not much on the quality of programs. What are the most effective materials with ABE level students? Provide training for our teachers in workshops so that they can work more effectively with the ABE student." He summarizes: "Generally, I hope that the state helps with improving the quality of the programs, not just all the talk and publicity." One form this could take is training for instructors, as Wheaton proposes: "It would be helpful to have some inservice education programs that would help the teachers understand how to deal with adults better, how to teach them, that kind of thing." Thullen feels that elementary school teachers can be quite successful in ABE, but "It's important to have some in-service workshops and a lot of staff development with those people to point out to them that they are working with adults."

The presidents also raised the possibility of the state providing model programs as well as the training for personnel to develop those programs. Wheaton explains: "If they can have personnel available to develop educational programs for the whole state instead of each school having to do it on an individual basis,... each school having to come up with its own way of educating students." In addition, the presidents also identified support services as a possible avenue of assistance from the state, including transportation and childcare.

The presidents were quick to emphasize that the state's provision of training and program development assistance should be "not mandatory" and should be developed in consultation with those working in the field who had developed successful practices and programs. Thullen explains: "I see it more as a coordinative effort. There's some very good people out in the field in the state and if the state could help bring it all together, I'd support that." This comment seems to support the responsive role the state office has taken in the past, and assumes that increasing program effectiveness is simply a matter of facilitating communication among those already working in the field. This attitude may relate to prior negative experiences with the state community college offices more than to thoughtful consideration of ABE, however. Thullen, for example, requested that the state "not just write up a bunch of policies and guidelines and cram them down somebody's throats." He adds: "I have found that you need help, you need that dissemination of ideas. It's just a matter of sharing" rather than administrative fiat.

The presidents agreed that curriculum level funding has increased the status and the visibility of ABE programs as well as the commitment of some presidents. Conver admits that, "Philosophy has been affected by the funding level of the program; perhaps that shouldn't be, but that's how it is." The funding change has come at a time when many presidents believe there is a decrease in the student population for the regular curriculum programs, further enhancing the attractiveness of ABE. They believe that: "In the past, everybody realized the need was there. We got a lot of lip service for a lot of years, but nobody was willing to fund it because it requires extra effort to deal with illiterate people.... We did the best we could with what we had" (Wheaton). Now, with the new funding level, Wheaton continues, "It allows us to do some things," such as hire recruiters, buy materials and engage in program development.

Thullen believes that ABE needs fulltime supplemented with parttime instructors: "I think it's just like any other program -- you need a good mix." He believes that there will be additional fulltime instructors in ABE as the full impact of FTE funding becomes felt. Thullen explains:

> One of the problems is when ABE was approved for FTE funding, they didn't give us any new start up money so we had to borrow from other programs, we had to borrow from Peter to pay Paul, so to speak, and so therefore it's gotten off to a slow start. But we'll catch up with it and hopefully as it begins to generate more FTE some of these kinds of things will happen.

The presidents seem to be aware that there is room for improvement in the ABE instructional program, even though their primary evaluative tool is enrollment figures. They are looking to the state for assistance, but leery of the state mandating a particular set of procedures or program organization. The presidents seem to distinguish between the literacy awareness campaign as a recruitment and public relations tactic and substantive program assistance. They support the state personnel's assessment that the change in funding levels has enhanced ABE's status, but they appear to recognize that simply funding more of the same programs will not necessarily enhance the effectiveness of their efforts to serve adults with low literacy skill levels in North Carolina.

LOCAL ADMINISTRATORS' PERSPECTIVES

Lankler and many other administrators believe that ABE "is a high priority of the community colleges," and they feel generally supported by the community college system administration. They view the state office as responsive, open and helpful. For example, Rich explains that at least three times a year there are meetings attended by state staff members in which he has an opportunity to "ask questions or get your questions answered or find out what's expected and then you go back and do it." He explains, "My idea of the state staff is that they are there to help us who are in the field and I've never called on them yet that they didn't give me what I wanted or respond to any requests that I might make, so I don't have any complaints or any suggestions right now."

Denton agrees that the state coordinator is "very dedicated and works hard." McCroy has found that, "Any assistance that we have asked for, they have been very quick to help us." Rakes also is generally satisfied: "I think we have good support, I think that right now the program is pretty stable. I think that we are growing tremendously and we are hoping to expand even more. So, I don't see where I could desire very much more than that." She adds: "If I have a problem I know that I can call [the state ABE program coordinator] and get an immediate response, right away.... She is that type of person that I can talk with her." Seymour adds: "Right now I would have to compliment Raleigh on providing as well as they have provided for ESL and ABE. They have provided the books free; they have provided tuition free."

Although directors like the state program coordinator, many express interest in new directions for the state office's leadership. Mark, for example, would like definitional issues resolved: "They're still hassling with who you can count, how to report them, how they're accountable for, all these things are still being worked out. The program is almost twenty something years old, and we're still dealing with the same thing." Rich would like the state to provide leadership encouraging institutions to employ directors full time in ABE as opposed to the current system in which "people have to wear so many hats." McCroy explains that, "One of the problems with that system is that we're more generalists than we are specialists. The same person has responsibility for training for industry, training for business, general public, and doing ABE too, in that particular geographic area." This leads to problems insuring that local directors or coordinators remain current about ABE program administration.

These issues primarily are administrative and regulatory, but administrators also requested assisted with improving the effectiveness of the instructional program. McCroy echoes the sentiments of many other administrators when he asserts:

> Assistance with the staff development and the training of the instructors, that might be an area where we could really use some help, and I could see that as one of maybe offering

> suggestions about teaching methodologies that work best in an ABE situation; offering suggestions about books and materials that work best; strategies to use -- if somehow we had some regional workshops.

It is important to note that the directors appear to be open to state leadership for program development, but they have not taken advantage of some opportunities they have had available for learning about the programs at other institutions. For example, the state now has been divided into regions and the directors have begun attending regional meetings at which they share some program information but primarily appear to discuss their understanding of state policies and regulations. This is consistent with the workshops that instructors describe, in which paperwork and testing regulations substitute for substantive skill development. Directors, as well as instructors, appear to be unable to place their programs in a broader framework of program models. McCroy, for example, comments: "I really can't say a whole lot about others because I don't know a whole lot about the other programs."

Directors report experiencing many of the impacts of FTE funding described by the state personnel, such as "more money," "more clout," and "more recognition." One director attests: "I had been there five years and the president did not know my name until ABE got curriculum funding and he knows my name now." Another director asserts: "Before,... I could very rarely get any advertisement in the newspaper unless I got an agency or a volunteer to pay for it. Now the public information officer handles it immediately when I send it over. That's what curriculum level funding has done for me."

The directors also reflect the assessment that the full impact has not yet been seen. For example, on director reports:

> ABE money has run the gammut of so many different things: first it counts, then it doesn't; does and it doesn't; it's state; it's federal; it's project; it's -- every time I say something about curriculum level funding, the president says, 'When are they going to change it again?' So, he's going to believe it when it stays there.

INSTRUCTORS' PERSPECTIVES

Instructors often feel that "the program itself lacks some structure" (Merritt). They assume this reflects the state's perspective, as Merritt explains, "The state doesn't even care whether or not I'm certified to teach, evidently.... Evidently [if] the students are there, they bring in the instructors part time." Creech assumes that the state sees Laubach training as a substitute for more extensive education and teaching experience. She is pleased that the Laubach training program "is designed so an average citizen can teach it because the instructors' books are laid-out so carefully and everything is done for you, you don't do a lot of creative teaching...you basically follow a teacher's book, or the teacher's manual, very closely."

Doyle, however, expresses the feelings of the majority of instructors when she attests:

> I feel that in order for the adult basic education in North Carolina to move forward, then there must be emphasis put on teacher training. ...New employees of the system need to have professional training from persons who have had experience in working with adults. ...A person needs some professional training in working with nonreaders or adults.... I really don't think that the Laubach method should be the only method for reading instruction here in the state of North Carolina. I feel that other methods should be looked at and used in the different classrooms.... I'm not excluding phonetics out of the instruction but I feel that that is not the only way to learn.

Doyle also feels that many instructors are not trained to administer and analyze test results; having the instructor responsible for using the WRAT can lead to serious problems with student placement and instruction.

Brower, a counselor working with many ABE students, also believes that ABE should emphasize academic instruction and not necessarily try to meet all of a student's needs. Unfortunately, there may be few other resources available, as she explains, "I think that anytime a person wants to learn, that that's reason enough to have a place for them to learn. But a number of them, I've come to believe, are here because they don't have any place else to go and they don't have any place else to be and this is the only place that they get any stimulation."

It is important to note that while instructors appear to be extremely dedicated to individual students they do not appear to feel responsible for understanding the larger programmatic and institutional context in which they are working. Hart was asked about the difference between her class, which is labeled ABE by the institution, and the GED program. She responds:

> I had to give all those people this achievement test and something about funding. And that -- I don't understand that. I know the class itself is supposed to be ABE -- But most people don't think of it as that. They think of it as working towards their GED. And I honestly don't know what the distinction is but I'm sure there's something.

Her reply is not unusual.

IMPLICATIONS

The state perspective appears to be that the delivery system already is in place and administrative or managerial assistance is needed now to facilitate cooperation among existing programs in a college and among colleges. This is shared, to some extent, by the presidents and directors. Missing is recognition that the current delivery system represents only one model from among a spectrum of possibilities and that there are educational as well as administrative issues to be addressed. The state, as well as local program personnel, appear to confine their notion of ABE to "school" oriented concepts rather than to look more broadly at the possibilities for providing educational assistance to those who are concerned with community rather than individual mobility issues or those who would like to read without necessarily returning to school.

There appears to be a vacuum of educational leadership that is seen at the state as well as the local program level. There are no state personnel whose responsibilities include attention to staff development, curriculum development, or issues of professionalism in the field of ABE, nor are these addressed at the local level. There appears to be some interest in the state providing training for instructors, but it is only among the instructors themselves that the full implications of the lack of training are heard. The instructors assume that this lack of emphasis on training implies that the state does not believe that such training is necessary. Thus, the state lowers the status of ABE in the eyes of its own employees while attempting to increase its status among presidents and legislators.

The funding story is important because it appears to be the terrain on which many critical conceptual issues about ABE, such as who it serves, and how it should look, are being fought. However, instead of being seen as philosophical, pedagogical, or conceptual "educational" issues affecting how teachers will teach and adult students will learn, these issues are being framed by those at all levels as administrative issues that have to do with data collection and dispersement of funds.

It is important to place this analysis in a broader perspective. These findings also reflect the national level in ABE, in which there is no national educational vision, one predominant program model, and a devaluing of rigorous research in favor of "how to" manuals. The state level program personnel in North Carolina share the deep commitment of their local program administrators and instructors, but they also have few models and leaders to follow. They have built and procured state funding for adult basic education in the community college system. Now they face the challenge of providing leadership for the improvement of the quality of their programs and, by so doing, providing leadership for the field of adult basic education, nationally.

SUMMARY

The state adult basic education program is in flux right now, with an infusion of new personnel and funding. One of the immediate effects of these changes is the statewide literacy awareness campaign, designed to increase public awareness of the problem of adult illiteracy and adult literacy education programs, as well as to increase student enrollment. There has been an overall emphasis on the form and structure of the programs in relation to other programs in the community college system rather than a focus on the internal dynamics and instructional effectiveness of the programs.

Those at the state level mirror the feelings of those at other levels of the system who do not feel in control of their programs, but subject to the regulatory pressures of others. Record keeping is seen in this framework, geared to meeting external demands rather than to improving program performance. With the new funding levels, record keeping is enhanced as a regulatory function, since the new funding is predicated on the numbers of students enrolled in a program. Programs now are audited by the state to certify their enrollment figures and the legitimacy of their activities. Many educational issues have been subsumed into funding issues, including the definition of an ABE student, the definition of activities appropriate for ABE classrooms, the nature of success in ABE and the definition of an ABE "completer."

Local ABE administrators, community college presidents, and state level staff appear to share a conception of the role of the state office as responsive and coordinating rather than providing educational leadership. Nonetheless, the presidents, instructors and administrators would like to see the state office provide additional services for their ABE programs, particularly instructor training. There is general recognition that this is an area which has suffered from inattention and lack of resources, although none of those interviewed, other than instructors, could really identify any specific impact that has been the result of the lack of training. This may be attributed to their lack of any framework within which they might evaluate their programs other than enrollment figures. A lack of knowledge about other programs exists at all levels in the system.

The problems and issues identified here are representative of those existing in the field of adult basic education as a whole. The challenges confronting those in North Carolina provide opportunities to provide leadership for the state and for the national field as well.

CHAPTER 10: CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The incorporation of adult basic education, conceptually, in the mission of the Community College system reflects North Carolina's deep commitment to facilitating lifelong learning for all citizens and a vision of economic and social progress which depends upon the continuing education of adults. The Community College system as it exists today in North Carolina and the Adult Basic Education program nationally are both relatively young. By wedding them to each other, North Carolina has simultaneously built the service delivery structures for basic reading and writing instruction as well as additional training and education for improving the quality of adults' personal, family, community and work life.

Over the years, ABE programs have developed to address the specific needs of their populations. What appears to have developed is a very diversified group of programs, loosely held together through a common service delivery structure -- the community college system -- and a common reporting procedure and set of regulations. Although the geographic locations, community college context and local population characteristics vary, there a number of issues shared by the state's ABE programs. The task of this evaluation has been to look at those broader issues as they are revealed by individual programs. These issues include:

*the extent to which students feel that their needs are being met;
*the extent to which the instructors are effectively and efficiently using their time with students;
*the extent to which program administrators are able to provide leadership and assistance to those working in their programs;
*the extent to which the state is providing leadership for those in individual programs;
*the extent to which programs show evidence of the ability to incorporate new insight and knowledge, new resource availability, and the context of student's lives;
*the extent to which programs are proactive rather than reactive; and
*the extent to which the instructional program reflects state of the art knowledge about providing adult basic education to adults.

It is important to remember that the focus of this evaluation has been on the instructional program, and that the purpose of research is to identify the common threads in diverse phenomena. Also, we find that the system is in motion right now. This report only can capture a period in time, with the understanding that the changes already underway are continuing even as this report is being prepared.

The issues and problems that have been identified in ABE by this report are by no means unique to North Carolina; they are consistent with those presently found at a national level. North Carolina is in a unique position to address these issues, however, because of the

Community College system's commitment to providing basic education to adults throughout the state. Adult basic education is central, rather than tangential, to the mission of the host institutions. In addition, North Carolina has committed state funds for adult literacy education in excess of those required by federal regulation, thus providing a mandate for the Community College system to actively develop adult basic education programs. It is in this context of existing state and local dedication and achievement that the following conclusions and recommendations are offered.

CONCLUSIONS

ONE: DEDICATION, COMMITMENT AND THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM

CONCLUSION: ABE PERSONNEL ARE GENUINELY DEDICATED TO THE MISSION OF THE COMMUNITY COLLEGE SYSTEM THROUGH THE PROVISION OF ADULT BASIC EDUCATION SERVICES.

Those participating in ABE in North Carolina are a very dedicated, committed group of people. Instructors spend their own money for materials and work many hours beyond those for which they are being paid. Administrators struggle to find the time to work with ABE, even though it means that they also work far more hours than those for which they are compensated. Those working on the state level believe in the goals of ABE and try to assist programs in constructive, responsive ways. Students take great initiative to remain involved with programs. There appears to be honest and deep concern for those persons in North Carolina in need of ABE services.

There is a new emphasis on employing recruiters for ABE, persons who know the community well and are well respected within the community. There also is a renewed interest in providing resources for instructors in the form of instructional specialists or master teachers, and a renewed concern for the difficulty of multiple job roles, particularly for ABE directors. There is some awareness of the potential of technology such as microcomputers in ABE programs, although this is not widespread yet. In addition, ABE programs engage in extensive cooperative linkage arrangements with community agencies such as Literacy Councils, Employment Security offices, a variety of social welfare agencies and local religious organizations, and with other programs within their institutions, such as GED and Adult High School.

This is a time of flux and change for ABE nationally as well as in North Carolina. There is an emerging mood of self-examination and change in the larger field, and there is a body of new research literature that points to potential new avenues for enhanced program effectiveness. There is a national literacy initiative that mirrors the awareness campaign and increased emphasis on literacy education for adults in N.C. This is a time when the adult educators of North Carolina can take a leadership position nationally in the field of adult basic education as well as assist local programs through a willingness to confront the existing problems and issues facing ABE in N.C. The time is ripe. Those in the field in other states are searching for responses to the same issues that exist in N.C., and North Carolina has something in its favor that does not exist in most other states: the Community College system as the service delivery vehicle.

The Community College system is in a unique position, as an institutional system geared to serving the educational needs of adults, to provide adult basic education as part of a continuum of services available to adults in North Carolina. At this time, many of the potential parts of such a continuum have been created, such as the Adult High School program, the Human Resources Development program, the developmental studies program and the curriculum areas, including college transfer programs. The challenge facing those working in the system is to truly bring those elements together to provide continuous educational services for N.C.'s adults. This is more than an administrative task; it requires a set of shared assumptions, a shared commitment to specific values and goals and the resources necessary to support dynamic development of the system. It requires a shared developmental conceptualization of adult education and a willingness to rise above the issues of individual program "turf" or "ownership" of personnel. These are difficult, complex, politically sensitive areas in which to work. It is within this context that ABE must be viewed as having potential beyond that which is currently realized.

In order for North Carolina to take a leadership position, it must think in terms of providing basic education for adults, rather than simply in terms of the ABE program. This means that the notion of adult basic education also must extend beyond the walls of the institution. For example, it must include adults who desire reading and writing skills for community development rather than for individual social mobility, and the programs must become involved in developing curriculum appropriate for these goals. ABE's experience with literacy education also can provide leadership for involving other organizations in adult basic education and literacy efforts, and ABE becomes an umbrella. Movement on a schooling hierarchy must be seen as only one possible path to success; enhanced personal life and community activity must be seen as viable alternative routes.

In addition, program personnel must be willing to search for the similarities in the midst of the differences among programs, and must recognize that programs, although unique, also share a number of common concerns. Some programs have found responses that others can learn from within the state, and some in other states may have applicability for North Carolina. ABE personnel must be open and willing learners who are able to move beyond traditional issues of turf protection and isolation. Furthermore, funds generated by ABE must return to ABE to support fulltime personnel who, in turn, can support change. The policy and programmatic recommendations that follow assume positive intentions on the part of administrative personnel in individual institutions to build an enhanced resource base for each program.

ABE in North Carolina has succeeded in developing some measure of stability within individual programs and institutions and support from the state legislators as a result of the deep commitment and hard work of ABE personnel over the past twenty years. Now it is time to move forward, to examine what is being done and to make commitments to future directions that can move ABE in North Carolina, and in the rest of the country, forward.

TWO: THE ABE "FAMILY"

CONCLUSION: ABE PERSONNEL PLACE AN EMPHASIS ON NURTURANCE, RESPONSIVENESS AND GOOD FEELINGS MORE THAN THEY ATTEND TO SUCCESSFUL LEARNING AND THE PROVISION OF LEADERSHIP

All personnel, at all levels in the program, believe that they are successful in their positions primarily due to their ability to be responsive, caring and sensitive. Their skills and knowledge in relation to ABE instruction are seen as having secondary importance for all, including instructors. Obviously, relating well to students is extremely important. No matter how well developed are one's understanding of the reading and writing processes, if one cannot relate to students the knowledge is useless. On the other hand, relating well serves no purpose if one is unable to help students progress as quickly as possible. It should be emphasized once again here that this perspective also is consistent with the larger field of adult basic education, in which caring and sensitivity are seen as more important qualities than specific skill and knowledge preparation for ABE instruction (Fingeret, 1985).

This conclusion has a number of levels of internal complexity. Students are quite articulate about the fact that their instructors' attitudes are instrumental in students' decisions to remain enrolled in the program. Students appreciate the accepting and supportive atmosphere in ABE programs, and do not want that to change. The emphasis on nurturance, therefore, is highly valued within this context.

Students' interest in ABE providing a kind of surrogate family vary. Some students, particularly those who are older, have full lives and explain that they have come to learn how to read, and they see prolonged social interaction for the purpose of building friendships as interfering with their learning process. Other students, however, appear to attend ABE to meet social as well as educational needs. Most students describe themselves as developing acquaintances with their fellow class members, rather than friendships. They may assist each other from time to time, but they do not identify ABE as a program in which "community" is developed.

Students in this study reflect the findings of other studies when they claim that participation in ABE has helped them to feel "better" about themselves. This often is attributed to the nurturing postures taken by staff members, rather than to student progress. The relationship between this enhanced self-concept and skill learning is not clear, but studies also show that most students come to programs to meet educational goals and that they feel those goals are being met, to some extent. This present study supports those findings but adds the suggestion that there is a relationship between skill learning and affective outcomes. The intent here is not to dissuade instructors from their caring approach to students, but rather to promote an approach of informed caring, based upon a solid foundation of skill and knowledge in the teaching of basic skills to adults.

It also is important to note that instructors raise a related issue. They value a sense of administrators' support and caring, but if they spend their own time and money to attend meetings they would like those meetings to meet educational rather than social or administrative needs. Similarly, some presidents complained that the state level has provided "cheer leading," with an emphasis on sensitivity to the "plight" of illiterate adults, rather than substantive programmatic assistance.

THREE: RESPONSE TO EXTERNAL FORCES

CONCLUSION: PROGRAMS AND PROGRAMMATIC DECISIONS ARE SEEN AS DICTATED BY EXTERNAL FORCES RATHER THAN AS CREATED BY PROACTIVE PARTICIPANTS.

ABE program participants and personnel at all levels appear to feel that many decisions that immediately affect their jobs or their learning are made through processes in which they have little or no participation. Students accept that ABE instructors' positions are insecure, that off-campus program sites are transient, and that they often must "chase" a program or orient a new instructor. Instructors assume that the program is financially insecure, that their positions are insecure regardless of their teaching ability, that they must use their personal funds to purchase materials and that they must dedicate many hours beyond those for which they are paid. Directors find that they simply implement decisions made at the federal or state government level, including decisions involving the definition of their responsibilities and the expectations of their programs. State level personnel see those in higher positions as having power over their resources and the criteria by which programs are evaluated.

This mode of response to external control is related to the previous theme and obviously has implications for the provision of leadership. Those who feel they have no participation in decision making processes that affect their own lives and jobs also do not see themselves as leaders, but rather as administrators, managers and responders. They do not feel responsible for generating new ideas or for advocating for their ideas, but rather for meeting the expectations, particularly in the area of record keeping, that have been defined by others. This is compounded by the lack of substantive training and education in adult basic education found among the large majority of ABE instructors and local and state level administrative personnel.

In addition, dependence on Laubach reinforces the notion of external control; in this case the materials become the method and they require certain arrangements that are not available in the classroom such as individual tutoring. Many instructors feel inadequate because of their inability to meet the demands of their materials, rather than due to their inability to conceptualize an appropriate reading program. In general, instructors are not proactive curriculum developers, using their knowledge of the field and of their students, but rather reactive consumers of commercial curricula.

Finally, this mode of thinking in terms of external forces may influence instructors' perceptions of the process through which students decide to discontinue active participation. Instructors tend to feel that students leave ABE before meeting their goals due to external forces such as childcare, transportation or family problems. We want to advocate that the state and individual programs play a larger role in the provision of support services for students, such as counseling, daycare and transportation. However, at the same time we want to suggest that programmatic factors appear to play a larger role in students' decisions than has been previously assumed.

FOUR: RECORD KEEPING AND DATA

CONCLUSION: RECORD KEEPING AND DATA ARE SEEN IN TERMS OF REGULATIONS AND ACCOUNTABILITY RATHER THAN INFORMING LOCAL EFFORTS FOR PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT.

All persons portray record keeping as a response to external demands rather than as an avenue for increasing program effectiveness through thoughtful collection and analysis of information. This is reinforced by the fact that instructors and administrators evaluate the ABE program in terms of enrollment figures. They are concerned about "getting" and "keeping" students and, secondarily, about movement on a schooling hierarchy. Enrollment figures are the focus of record keeping tasks and do not reflect the less tangible aspects of program success defined by those in all positions in the program. Instructors' attention is drawn to enrollment figures as the measure of success, rather than focusing on program and professional skill development.

Administrators as well as instructors express concern with record keeping. This is related to their dissatisfaction with the forms and reports they must fill out, with the use of the WRAT test for assessment purposes, to their concerns about generating FTE level funding and, therefore, the possibility of being audited. There is a generally understood recognition that the data submitted to the state are unreliable and a general consensus that this is the best that can be done at this point. Record keeping is not described in terms of the usefulness of the information but in terms of fulfilling regulations and requirements from the state and the federal office. Administrators appear to use the data they generate only to gain the broadest knowledge of whether enrollment is increasing or decreasing in specific areas. There does not appear to be an understanding of the ways in which data can inform program development and self-evaluation.

FIVE: DEFINITIONS OF SUCCESS

CONCLUSION: SUCCESS IS VIEWED IN TERMS OF ENROLLMENT, ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION, WHICH ARE RELATED TO FUNDING, MORE THAN IN TERMS OF STUDENT PROGRESS.

Those involved in ABE programs appear to have been unable to separate the enrollment data necessary for accountability purposes to funding sources from the information necessary for assessing student progress. As a result, enrollment data substitute for substantive assessments of progress, and expectations of student progress are downplayed. If students attend consistently, they are considered successes regardless of skill acquisition progress. In addition, if instructors attract and "keep" students, they are considered successes. In fact, it might be said that the nature of the reward system -- FTE generation -- mitigates against effective instruction since it reinforces the notion that enrollment figures are a valid measure of program effectiveness.

This conclusion obviously is strongly related to those previously described. Many instructors and administrators believe that students who are not apparently learning nonetheless enjoy program participation and are enhancing their self-concepts. It may be that there are some students whose primary motivation for participation is social contact, but these students appear to be in the minority. Most students link self-concept development to learning progress once they are beyond their initial program involvement. It must be remembered, in addition, that the criteria used for employing instructors supports the instructors' beliefs; these criteria may undermine program effectiveness by overemphasizing social and personality factors and underemphasizing skill and knowledge.

Many adults enrolled in programs already are lifelong learners. They are able to describe their ability to learn on their jobs and in their personal lives. They look to their involvement in ABE as an opportunity to enhance and to broaden their abilities, as well as seeing ABE as a chance to assist them in attaining a schooling credential. Many have developed insight into their learning styles and preferences, but this insight does not appear to be drawn upon by the majority of ABE instructors. At times, students discontinue participation in a program until they are able to find a site at which they can participate in their preferred learning situation. Students, therefore, appear to see a role for themselves in successful participation that is discounted by instructors and administrators.

We find that the instructional program is organized around a concept of individualized pacing, rather than individualizing according to learning style or preference. Students are classified according to their "level" of attainment and taught similarly to each other in the majority of classrooms. Instructors are concerned about the "reasons" students enrolled in the program, but do not appear to solicit information about students' previous learning experiences. Instruction focuses on skills but does not appear to assist students, other than indirectly, in continuing to develop insight into their own learning abilities. We question, therefore, the extent to which students are being encouraged to be continuing lifelong learners in their daily lives as well as in schooling environments.

Program organization varies, but all programs reflect an orientation to individual mobility rather than to community development. This model meets the needs of a certain percentage of adults in North Carolina, but may limit the appeal of the program to many other adults who desire assistance with reading and writing skills in order to facilitate broad community change. The program remains primarily oriented to schooling and to movement on a schooling hierarchy rather than to literacy in a broader sense. This has been obscured by the use of the ABE program as the cornerstone of the state's literacy campaign.

In North Carolina presently, literacy education is being explicitly connected to employment and state economic development. Examination of our data, however, reveals patterns that are consistent with those found in other states: only a fraction of ABE participants are in ABE explicitly for employment-related reasons. This includes those who describe their goals as "Getting a GED" who later say they are interested in the credential for employability reasons. It is extremely difficult to document the relationship between ABE participation and employment, since ABE enhances employability in a number of indirect ways and factors other than school attainment influence hiring. It also is important to note that employment is not a primary motivation for many students, particularly those who are older and established in their jobs or retired.

Of course, the educational attainment level of a state's population generally contributes to its attractiveness to corporate planners, but it is dangerous to link the evaluation of ABE to indicators such as job acquisition or mobility. We do not want to undermine interest in connecting ABE to job preparation programs. However, ABE should be viewed as a broad investment in the future quality of life for N.C. citizens, rather than simply as the first step in job training.

SIX: STATE OF THE ART IN ABE

CONCLUSION: INSTRUCTORS' AND ADMINISTRATORS' LACK OF SKILL AND KNOWLEDGE OF CURRENT TRENDS IN ADULT BASIC EDUCATION LIMITS THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM.

Many instructors have a background in elementary education and depend upon that previous education for fulfilling their ABE instructional responsibilities. To some extent, that appears to meet the needs of those adults who are able to learn in ways that are similar to how children learn, or are able to manipulate the instruction according to their knowledge of their own learning styles. These instructors at least have some understanding of the reading process, albeit oriented to children, and an ability to approach instruction through a variety of techniques. This is quite valuable. Other instructors, without that background, are dependent on their materials and much more limited in their approach to instruction. However, neither of the two groups appears to move beyond training into the realm of education, helping adults develop insight into their internalized model of the learning to read process and moving from dysfunctional to more functional approaches to learning. This means that while instructors' skills and knowledge may be valued and seen as having tremendous worth in the programmatic context, the merit of their skills and knowledge is open to question.

Instructors are extremely dedicated and reflect the beliefs of their administrators and the state personnel that personality characteristics are more important than professional expertise for success as an instructor. This belief is encouraged by the lack of pre-service training in many cases, and the lack of a coherent program of in-service training. State conferences as well as local instructor training concentrate on administrative responsibilities, such as record keeping and test reporting, rather than on substantive instructional issues. At no point could we identify an ongoing source of intellectual stimulation and challenge, input of new ideas, or a model of continuing learning and professional development in relation to the state of the art knowledge base in adult basic education.

There are few adult education, instruction, curriculum or teaching experts involved in ABE statewide. The instructional program reflects the underlying assumption that the instruction of adults differs from that of children primarily in terms of adults' interests and "poor self-concepts." Instructional methods and materials reflect many instructors' prior training in elementary education and their lack of continuing professional education. One instructional program in basic reading -- Laubach -- is predominantly depended upon even though it was designed for a different situation (one-to-one tutoring) and a specific group of learners (those who can learn phonetically). As a result, the instructional program is limited in its effectiveness because many instructors do not have a framework within which they can analyze instructional problems, collaborate with students or generate creative approaches to their teaching. They tend to identify ABE instruction with emotional rather than intellectual, skill or cognitive rewards, for themselves and, in some cases, for their students.

North Carolina adult basic education does not appear to have a strong national presence, actively participating in leadership positions in the national adult education professional associations, presenting information about the work in North Carolina at national gatherings, or publishing articles about the relationship between ABE and the Community College system, which is a topic of great interest to other states. Many of those interviewed were unaware of the existence of national adult education organizations, journals relating to ABE specifically, or the body of expanding research relating to adult literacy education. Most persons were not aware of special projects conducted in other states that may provide insight useful to North Carolina and, in fact, many were unaware of N.C.'s previous special projects. Persons were not familiar with the National Dissemination Network's identification of model adult literacy education projects.

There is evidence that some instructors, directors and state level personnel recognize that the lack of ongoing professional development for instructors and administrators presents some problems. However, since enrollment is being maintained or increasing, there appears to be a minimization of the implications of this lack of skill and knowledge since enrollment remains the major indicator of program success.

RECOMMENDATIONS

RECOMMENDATION I: TRAINING AND EDUCATION

> The State should provide leadership for the development and provision of a coherent ongoing training and education program for ABE instructors and directors.

This is recommended to meet the following objectives:

*Development and enhancement of a professional identity relating to adult basic education among those employed by ABE.

*Development and support of positive attitudes toward and engagement in continuing inquiry, learning, and personal and professional growth through employment in ABE.

*Increased incorporation of applicable research findings into practice and increased contributions by N.C. ABE personnel to the professional literature.

*Development of a pool of qualified potential instructors.

*Increased communication among ABE personnel and increased utilization of skills, knowledge, experience and products developed by ABE personnel in the last 20 years.

*Increased communication between ABE and other personnel involved in adult literacy education and between ABE and other personnel teaching in the community college system.

Training and education for new and experienced instructors and directors is expected to differ according to the needs and interests of each group and to build upon the pre-existing skills applicable from prior education. The next section focuses on the content most appropriate for each group. It should be remembered, however, that the entire training and education program must be integrated; the perspectives, skills, knowledge, attitudes, beliefs, assumptions and expectations of each group influences those of the other groups.

Instructors -- Pre-service

> The State should provide leadership for the development and provision of orientation and pre-service training and education for new ABE instructors.

This training should include but not necessarily be limited to:

a. overview of the field of adult basic education including sociocultural perspectives of nonliterate adults and professional organizations and journals related to ABE;
b. overview of the relationship between ABE and other programs in the Community College system and in the instructor's institution;
c. introduction to adult learning and development theory;

d. introduction to adult reading, writing and math instruction theory and research;
e. overview of the roles and responsibilities of instructors, including a focus on instructional, administrative and professional development areas;
f. specific training in adult instructional methods and techniques emphasizing development of students' insight into their own learning preferences, understanding students' life contexts and reading for meaning using phonic, context and sight word clues;
g. collaborative student skill assessment and lesson planning;
h. opportunities to observe at least two different instructors followed by analysis of each;
i. opportunities to examine and analyze a variety of commercially produced and instructor-created adult instructional materials;
j. opportunities to practice adult basic education instruction skills through role playing or other experiential techniques.

It is further recommended that this program be conducted in regional locations periodically and that adults interested in pursuing employment in ABE programs be encouraged to participate as part of their commitment to the possibility of future employment. In other words, it is the intent of this recommendation to set up a mechanism through which a group of potential instructors are provided with the prerequisite skills and knowledge for employment; a pool of qualified personnel must be created from which directors may choose employees. Participation in the training and education program does not insure employment in ABE, nor should the program exist solely to prepare those who already are in classrooms. Success in creating a pool of qualified instructors may be enhanced through affiliation with a university adult education graduate program which could offer graduate credit. It is possible that some experienced instructors may need or want to participate in the pre-service program since they may lack that background knowledge.

Instructors -- In-service

> The State should provide leadership for the development and provision of in-service training and education for experienced ABE instructors.

This should be a coherent program which includes but is not necessarily limited to the following topics:

a. identification and remediation of specific adult learning disabilities;
b. curriculum development theory;
c. instructional materials development and the use of media, technology and visual aids;
d. indepth adult reading, writing and math instruction theory;
e. sociocultural characteristics of nonliterate and working class adults;
f. keeping abreast of and applying new research findings;
g. writing for publication;
h. the role of instructor as researcher;

i. group process and group instructional techniques in ABE;
j. collaborative student skills assessment and instructional planning;
k. developing linkages to community resources and community college resources;
l. instructor skills and knowledge self-assessment;
m. additional topics to be identified by instructors, administrators and state level personnel.

It is further recommended that this training and education be conducted regionally on a periodic basis as part of the state's commitment to the development of high quality adult basic education programs. There should be a coherence to the overall program rather than simply provision of a series of disconnected two-hour workshops. This may take the form of a professional development institute and may be affiliated with a university awarding graduate education credit for participation. The central objectives of the in-service program are to develop an enhanced sense of professionalism and continuing professional development among experienced ABE instructors and to facilitate incorporation of new skills and knowledge into ABE instruction.

Directors -- Orientation

The State should provide leadership for the development and provision of an orientation program for new ABE directors.

The topics should include but not necessarily be limited to:

a. overview of the field of adult basic education including sociocultural perspectives of nonliterate adults and professional organizations and journals related to ABE;
b. overview of the relationship between ABE and the larger community, other programs in the Community College system and other programs in the director's institution;
c. historical perspective on ABE in N.C. and overview of the legislation, regulation and funding mechanisms applying to ABE programs;
d. introduction to the program development and evaluation process;
e. introduction to adult learning and development theory;
f. overview of the role and responsibilities of directors, including instructional supervision;
g. introduction to adult reading, writing and math instruction theory and research emphasizing reading for meaning using phonic, context and sight word clues;
h. overview of alternative instructional arrangements, including group and individual instruction and their relationship to materials, methods and instructor competencies;
i. overview of alternative programmatic arrangements, including individually oriented and community-oriented programs.
j. overview of resources and assistance available through the director's existing ABE program, community college and local community; other ABE program directors; state ABE and community college system personnel; and the wider professional

field of adult basic education.

Since directors often are chosen from outside the ranks of ABE instructors and may be employed with little or no prior notice, this orientation may take the form of a self-administered instructional package, or set of modules, in workbook and casette tape format. This could be supplemented by periodic meetings of new directors for an orientation session in Raleigh. This outline is based on the assumption that ABE directors need an overview of research, theory and practice relating to ABE in order to provide effective supervision for their instructors and to take informed, proactive roles in further program development. The major objective is to provide new directors with that background. The skills and knowledge addressed in this orientation should be applicable to the range of additional programmatic responsibilities often confronting ABE directors as well.

Directors -- Continuing Education

> The State should provide leadership for the development and provision of a continuing education program for experienced ABE directors.

Opportunities should be provided for pursuing the following topics in addition to other topic areas that may be identified by the directors or the state office personnel:

a. Identifying and remediating specific adult learning disabilities
b. Identifying and procuring additional program funding
c. Instructional and program planning, development and evaluation methods and techniques
d. Curriculum development theory
e. Supervision of instruction
f. Personnel practices and skills
g. Action research methods and using the research literature
h. Writing for publication
i. Developing community resources and linkages
j. Instructional approaches to working with nonliterate adults
k. Designing a record keeping system that assists program development efforts
l. Developing multiple instructional arrangements
m. The politics of the community college system
n. Developing institutional ties and collaborative efforts within the community college system

It is further recommended that this continuing education program be available regionally as well as incorporated into existing statewide directors' conferences, and that it provide a coherent continuing education program in administration specifically oriented to adult basic education. This program may be affiliated with a university offering graduate course credit or a certificate in Community College Administration. This effort is designed to provide the indepth knowledge and skill that will facilitate ABE directors' development of an informed and proactive stance toward instructor supervision and ongoing program development.

RECOMMENDATION 2: ABE PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT CENTER

> The State should provide leadership in establishing and maintaining a program development center responsible for providing ongoing training, education and other program development assistance to local ABE programs in North Carolina.

The development of a program development center is an ambitious effort expected to take a period of three to five years to implement fully. It may take many different forms, but should be separate from the state community college offices, with two or three full-time staff members responsible for overall development, organization, implementation and evaluation of the center's activities. The center's primary purpose should be development and provision of the training and education programs outlined in Recommendation 1, above, by providing leadership in curriculum development and identifying, employing and supervising individual education and training program facilitators at regional sites. Center affiliation with a university will facilitate research utilization. The center also can be responsible for a number of additional functions, such as:

*development and dissemination of a newsletter;

*development of assessment procedures for ABE students;

*creation of a clearinghouse for products from prior special projects and special projects developed in other states that are relevant to North Carolina;

*linkage with existing community projects

*providing workshops at statewide conferences or regional meetings on specific topics of immediate interest to instructors and directors, such as alternatives to strict phonics approaches in instruction or supervision of instructors;

*development of a bank of consultants on various aspects of ABE instruction and administration who would be available to assist individual or regional groups of ABE programs;

*encouraging representation of N.C.'s efforts at continuing program development to the field nationally through assisting directors and instructors in the preparation of articles for journals such as Adult Literacy and Basic Education and the Community College Review and papers for national adult education conferences; and

*support for additional research.

Most importantly, the staff can assist those with valuable experience in ABE in N.C. to share their expertise with others, building upon the foundation already established in the state.

Time Line

The tasks involved in establishing the program over the next three years may be divided as follows:

Year One (1985-86): Planning. Investigate similar programs existing in other states (i.e., Illinois, California); investigate interest in participation on the part of existing N.C. ABE personnel; investigate resources available through the Community College system (i.e., staff development office) and through the national Adult Education Clearinghouse and the Diffusion Network; investigate existing locally developed ABE training and education programs; involve ABE directors and instructors in identifying objectives for the first set of programs to be developed. Product: A plan and priorities for the programs to be offered through the Institute.

Year Two (1986-87): Curriculum and program development. Under the supervision of the full time staff, develop the curricula and programs to be offered during the third year, drawing upon the expertise and resources identified in the first year. Conduct pilot tests of programs whenever possible, and revise.

Year Three (1987-88): Initial program offering, follow-up, revision and planning for the next three-year period.

Training and Education Program Organization, Process and Methods

The effectiveness of a training and education program depends upon the extent to which participants are able to use new knowledge and skills in their jobs as instructors or directors. The center's program, therefore, must provide opportunities for participants to examine and build upon their existing knowledge and skills and to practice new skills in a supportive, yet critical environment. As an educational program, it must assist participants in developing additional insights about themselves, their own attitudes, beliefs and assumptions, and their relationships with colleagues and students. Foremost, the program must model the behaviors, attitudes, methods and processes which the participants are being asked to develop, whenever possible and appropriate.

The inclusion of proposed training and education program content outlines in this report may encourage the development of a program emphasizing solely the cognitive, or knowledge, aspects of training. It is important to place information within a broader educational perspective in which learning and applying new knowledge is part of a process of collaboration, self-examination, experimentation under supervision, reflection and growth. The State is encouraged to explore program designs that provide opportunities for experiential learning, application to participants' work context, when appropriate, followed by reflection and analysis. This may mean that participants meet, return to work (in the case of in-service programs), and then meet again rather than participate in an intensive training and education program in which participants are isolated from their work settings.

The center should provide these programs on a regional basis to facilitate attendance and development of networks among directors and instructors. Statewide conferences may provide additional training and educational opportunities for directors and instructors, but should not be relied upon as the primary delivery mechanism. Fees and expenses associated with participation should be borne by the state as part of its commitment to quality adult basic education for its citizens. Facilitators for the training and education programs should be knowledgeable about the content areas for which they are responsible, should be experienced in adult basic education, and should be creative, skilled, experientially oriented adult educators. They may be drawn from the national field of adult basic education as well as from North Carolina's universities, community colleges and adult basic education programs. Provision of graduate education credit should be investigated whenever appropriate.

RECOMMENDATION 3: INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

> The State should provide leadership for improving the quality of existing ABE programs through the development of policies and procedures supporting the provision of instructional and programmatic alternatives.

This is intended to meet the following objectives:

*Enhanced ability of individual programs to meet the range of learning goals, motivations, styles and preferences of individual students.

*Increased ability of individual instructors to meet the diverse learning styles and preferences of adults in any one group.

*Enhanced ability of the ABE program to address students' related needs through the provision of professional services.

Related recommendations are:

> The State should provide leadership for development of a mechanism that will enable local institutions to reimburse instructors for class preparation time and professional development expenses.
>
> The State should actively pursue allocation to ABE of funds generated by the ABE program to utilize those funds for full time directors, instructors and support personnel.

The following local program recommendations are intended to support these recommendations to the State. It should be understood that some programs already are operating in accordance with these recommendations; their experience should be shared with other programs.

ABE directors and instructors should develop a range of instructional and programmatic alternatives rather than depending on any one particular instructional system or program mode.

ABE directors should develop positions and employ personal and employment counselors and student recruiters for ABE.

Individual ABE programs should make a commitment to providing adult basic literacy instruction through their own instructional resources.

ABE directors should identify and employ full time instructors as master, or lead, instructors who will provide assistance and supervision to other ABE instructors as well as providing direct instruction to students.

ABE directors should be encouraged to take leadership roles in their local communities, bringing together all of the providers and potential providers of adult basic education.

RECOMMENDATION 4: RECORD KEEPING

The State should clarify the distinction between record keeping responsibilities that meet the expectations of funding sources and policy makers and those that assist local programs with development efforts.

In support of this recommendation, the following related recommendations are offered:

The State should develop, in conjunction with local programs, a list of criteria for the FTE auditors and a set of record keeping expectations.

The State should provide leadership in designing and implementing a computerized record keeping system that serves the needs of local programs through provision of up-to-date information useful for evaluation and planning efforts.

The State should take measures to improve the quality of data collected about individual ABE programs, instructors and students.

Individual programs should be encouraged to develop registration procedures for students that provide baseline information useful for program evaluation and planning.

RECOMMENDATION 5: STUDENT COMPLETION

The State should take the leadership for developing a certificate of completion with attendant criteria and assessment techniques for Adult Basic Education program participants.

RECOMMENDATION 6: RESEARCH

The state should regularly fund research projects that provide insight into the status of adult basic education in North Carolina, provide opportunities for collaborative research efforts between university and local ABE program personnel, and provide guidance for future efforts.

These projects may include research examining:

*the consequences and impact of the change to curriculum level funding;
*practices identified as successful within North Carolina as well as in other states;
*the relationship between program effectiveness, development and community linkages; and
*the impact of training and education provided to instructors and administrative personnel.

It is intended that research efforts be integrated into the overall continuing program development agenda of state and local personnel.

DISCUSSION

Adult basic education in North Carolina is meeting the needs of a percentage of those adults in the state who appear to be appropriate for the services. Although the present literacy awareness campaign can be expected to engage additional adults in ABE programs, this report suggests that some policy and programmatic changes are necessary to make a truly significant difference in participation and success. Legislators and policy makers in North Carolina have made a commitment to adult basic education by providing a potential infusion of state money and a mechanism for enhanced status of ABE within each institution. Now the next step must be taken, which is the allocation of those funds for program development -- not simply program expansion, but true development efforts.

Judging the merit and worth of North Carolina's ABE program is difficult and complex. Students appreciate the program's existence and their instructors' concern; instructors like their jobs and their administrators, by and large. Administrators are committed to ABE and like the state personnel's responsiveness while the state office staff enjoy their friendly relationships with those in the field. On this level, it would appear that all is well with ABE in N.C.

It is important to take the analysis to another level, however. Instructors in local programs are unaware of how their efforts compare with those of other instructors; administrators often are not aware of how their programs compare with those at other institutions; and the state staff questions the usefulness of lessons to be learned from other states. There is a theme of isolation in the name of autonomy and uniqueness running throughout the data, and one consequence of this isolation is a limited framework on the part of instructors, administrators and state staff within which they can assess their efforts. This must be taken into account when examining how those in the programs attach value to their efforts. It is this unexamined framework that we bring to the attention of ABE providers in N.C. This is the same issue that we raise in relation to the themes of "making do" among administrative personnel and individualization among instructors, particularly those we have classified as volunteers.

The importance of maintaining the ability to question the assumptions and beliefs underlying practice is further supported by the recent research literature. Much of the conventional wisdom on which the field has been operating for the past twenty years now is under scrutiny and not necessarily supported by recent research findings. This includes assumptions about the similarities between child and adult beginning readers, the role of assessment methods and materials in the teaching - learning process, and the centrality of students' sociocultural context in the transition from nonreader to reader. Programs must have the ability and willingness to test, refine, apply and generate knowledge in these and other areas.

The recommendations can be seen as having two basic foci: training and policy. The emphasis in the recommendations on providing a coherent system of training and education is intended to assist ABE personnel in the development of a framework within which they can assess their current efforts and create appropriate alternatives to meet the needs of students more effectively. It is not meant to imply that there is a body of knowledge that would provide all of the "right answers" but rather to engage personnel in the kind of ongoing inquiry most appropriate to the field at this stage in its development. The policy recommendations are meant to enable further program development and training. Overall, our recommendations are intended to challenge and exploit the existing dedication and commitment to ABE by encouraging the development of skilled adult basic education professionals who continue to embody the concern and sensitivity that is so important to building positive relationships with students.

These recommendations are offered with the understanding that they are not new, by and large. They are consistent with recommendations offered in the national literature over the past decade and, indeed, with those offered by ABE directors and instructors in North Carolina within the past few years. Even a cursory examination of program documents reveals that the issues of low instructor salaries and lack of payment for preparation time, multiple responsibilities for directors, lack of instructor and director training and education, dependence upon Laubach and upon parttime instructors, lack of institutionalized student support services and the lack of identification of adult basic education as a field of knowledge have been previously identified in N.C. (Issues/Problems, 1980). We can only hope that the thorough nature of the present investigation lends credence to the impact of these problems upon the effectiveness of the instructional program.

This evaluation study has been limited to a one year investigation of the ABE instructional program. As such, it is limited by time and scope. The report has shown that there appears to be a large degree of consistency between the perspectives of those at different levels in the program. Additional research is needed to fully understand this phenomenon, however. It is important to illuminate the various aspects of the administrators' responsibilities, for example, and to place ABE in the context of ABE directors' various roles and functions. Additional research also is needed to provide additional insight into the place of ABE in the range of institutional presidents' responsibilities, and in the context of instructors' lives. In addition, research further examining the relationship between participation in ABE and other arenas of adult students' lives is needed urgently.

These recommendations are intended to support the continued development of a collaborative climate among those involved in adult basic education in North Carolina, including students. They stress the importance of emerging leadership, however, rather than the more reactive stance that has largely been taken in the past by those in administrative positions at all levels. The challenge of providing leadership in a democracy is complex, difficult and challenging. It is well worth the struggle, however, for the future success of adult basic education rests upon the ideas, experience and creativity of all who work in ABE, stimulated and enabled through the guidance of those in leadership roles.

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APPENDIX

1. Original letter sent to ABE directors (Planning Study)
2. Survey sent to stakeholders (Planning Study)
3. Initial design description sent to stakeholders (Planning Study)
4. Interview and observation guide
5. Student interview guide
6. Study participant data sheets

1. Original letter sent to ABE directors

North Carolina State University
School of Education
School of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Department of Adult and Community College Education
Box 5504, Raleigh, NC 27650-5504

December 29, 1982

Dear ABE Director:

The North Carolina Department of Community Colleges has funded a Special Project this year for the Department of Adult and Community College Education at North Carolina State University to design a statewide ABE program evaluation. The principle objectives of this project are the following:

1. Identify the stakeholders (ABE directors, CC/TI administrators, DCC personnel, etc.) and the program aspects that should be included in an ABE evaluation;
2. Specify data appropriate for measuring those identified program aspects;
3. Consider design alternatives;
4. Conduct small-scale feasibility tests of alternative data collection techniques;
5. Develop a design according to stakeholder specifications; and
6. Determine whether there is support for conducting an evaluation as designed.

The success of such a project depends upon broad participation of the ABE community.

The first stage of the project is to identify those individuals who are stakeholders in the ABE program and, therefore, should participate directly in the planning of the evaluation study. These persons will be asked for assistance at the following points:

1. An initial questionnaire, designed to identify program aspects and data sources, will be mailed in early January. Efforts are being made to design a questionnaire that will require a minimum amount of time for response and yet provide the necessary information to generate design alternatives.
2. Approximately two months following the return of the questionnaires, we will circulate the results of data analysis and descriptions of alternative evaluation designs for review and comments.
3. Approximately three months later, we will circulate a revised evaluation design for comments.

Telephone interviews may be used in some cases to supplement questionnaire data.

Since each ABE program operates in a unique way, there is no established list of persons who are actively involved in the ABE program at the various locations. Therefore, we would appreciate your identifying those individuals, in addition to yourself, who should participate in this planning activity. On the enclosed form, please provide the names, positions, addresses and telephone numbers of those individuals whom you think should receive a questionnaire from the special project. These may include institution administrators (such as Deans of Continuing Education or College Presidents), program faculty, volunteers, members of the Participatory Planning Committee, students, community leaders or other persons you would like to involve in this planning process.

Please feel free to add pages to the response form; broad participation will insure the best possible project results. If you have any questions about completing the enclosed form or about the project, please call me at 919-737-3590.

I would appreciate your completed form by January 10, 1983.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Arlene Fingeret
Project Coordinator

Enclosure

2. Survey sent to stakeholders

North Carolina State University
School of Education
School of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Department of Adult and Community College Education
Box 5504, Raleigh, NC 27650-5504

February 8, 1983

It has been ten years since North Carolina last evaluated the statewide ABE program. This year, the North Carolina Department of Community Colleges has funded a Special Project for the Department of Adult and Community College Education at North Carolina State University to ascertain interest in a statewide ABE program evaluation and to design the evaluation, if interest is indicated. The success of such a project depends upon broad participation in the development of an evaluation format that will gather useful data and will be cost effective.

You have been suggested as someone who should be included in the process of making a decision about an evaluation, and in the planning for an evaluation. There are three points at which we will request your assistance:

1. We have enclosed general descriptions of evaluation, recruitment, and retention. Please review and provide your response to the questions at the end of each section. Add any general comments and suggestions that you think helpful.
2. In approximately two months we will circulate the results of our analysis of the responses. We will propose alternative evaluation designs, as indicated by responses, for your review and comments.
3. Approximately three months later, we will circulate a revised evaluation design for your comments.

Telephone interviews and small-scale feasibility studies will supplement written responses.

We know that your schedule is busy and your time is limited, but your ideas, experience and knowledge are vital for this project to succeed. Responses will be disseminated only as aggregate data; individual responses are confidential. We appreciate your willingness to share your ideas with us. Please complete the survey and return it in the envelope enclosed for your convenience by March 4, 1983. If you would like to discuss the survey or project, please call me at 919-737-3590.

Sincerely,

Arlene Fingeret
Project Coordinator

North Carolina State University is North Carolina's original land-grant institution and is a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina.

ABE Evaluation Planning Study

A. Evaluation

Directors of ABE programs in North Carolina have identified recruitment and retention of participants as major concerns. Therefore, one possibility for an evaluation study is an examination of recruitment and retention in ABE. The purpose of this project is to determine the support for an evaluation which focuses on these two program areas. Evaluation compares what currently exists with some standard or criteria. Because notions of "good" recruitment and retention may differ according to the perspective of those involved (i.e., student participants, program administrators, faculty, etc.), we propose that criteria used to judge collected "evidence" reflect concerns of each group. Judgments generally help us 1) to know how good the program is (or its parts are), and 2) to identify ways to improve the program. Since the identification of criteria involves the participation of a broader group than those involved in this planning project, we propose a two-stage evaluation design. In the first stage, the criteria will be established, and the current status of the program will be identified and described. In the second stage, these two aspects will be compared. Please answer the following questions before proceeding:

Do you believe that an evaluation as described in (A) above would be useful at this time in North Carolina?

__________yes __________no

If no, do you believe that an evaluation should be conducted at this time at all?

__________yes __________no

If yes, is there a focus other than recruitment and retention that you believe would be more useful? Please describe your own design ideas. For example: Among alternatives to the design above is an evaluation focusing on additional or different program aspects. Also, existing standards may be used although such standards usually represent only the perspective of program administration.

B. Recruitment

Evaluation of recruitment involves the identification of potential program participants and a judgment of the extent to which those persons are served by the ABE program. The first stage of the evaluation project will establish standards and describe the current status in the following areas:

-characteristics of potential program participants and the means of identifying them (i.e., census reports, school records, etc.)
-means of engaging those persons in the program
-ratio of potential program participants to those actually served by the program

Standards and current status will be derived through interaction with adults having less than 8 years of formal schooling, ABE teachers and administrators, and other persons affiliated with ABE programs (community leaders, employers, etc.). In the second stage of the evaluation project, the current status will be compared with the standards developed. Recruitment is related to retention, but before continuing to the discussion of retention, please pause and respond to the following questions:

Do you think that recruitment should be evaluated as described above at this time in North Carolina?

__________yes __________no

If no, please describe any alternative methods that you would prefer. One available alternative is an evaluation that identifies potential participants using census data relating to years of schooling completed as the standard without consideration of individual goals.

C. Retention

Evaluation of retention basically involves investigating why program participants remain in the program and why they leave. We are interested in how long they remain in the program, and whether that has any relationship to their original goals or to progress they are making in the program. When they leave a program, we want to know if they continue in another educational or training program, if they return to the ABE program at a later date, or if they do not return either because their goals have been met or because they are dissatisfied or have changed their original goals. In the first stage of the proposed evaluation design, the groups identified in paragraphs (A) and (B) will be asked to identify from their perspective, the standards and current status in relation to these questions. In addition, program records and data reports will be examined for retention information. This completes our description of a potential ABE evaluation study. Please respond to the questions below:

Do you think that retention as described should be evaluated at this time in North Carolina?

__________yes __________no

If no, please suggest alternatives. One possible alternative is to analyze statistically existing data reports which will yield general information about the number of participants served and the length of time they remain active in the program.

We recognize that this format of description and questions may not provide opportunities for you to share fully your ideas and feelings about the possibility of conduction an evaluation of ABE in North Carolina. We are interested in all of your comments; please feel free to add sheets to this form so that you may express your thoughts and feelings fully. We would appreciate your response by March 4, 1983. Thank you for your assistance. Please send your completed form and additional comments to

Arlene Fingeret
Dept. ACCE
310 Poe Hall
N. C. State University
Raleigh, N. C. 27607

3. Initial design description sent to survey respondents

North Carolina State University
School of Education
School of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Department of Adult and Community College Education
Box 5504, Raleigh, NC 27650

June 27, 1983

MEMORANDUM

TO: ABE Directors and Selected Members of the N.C. ABE Community
FROM: Arlene Fingeret, Director, ABE Evaluation Special Project
Lib Braswell, Assistant, ABE Evaluation Special Project

RE: Evaluation Design Proposal

Thank you for responding to the preliminary Adult Basic Education (ABE) evaluation planning survey. As you may remember, the purpose of this special project study is to develop an evaluation design reflecting the concerns of the ABE community that will be submitted to the N.C. Department of Community Colleges for possible funding in 1983-84. Respondents overwhelmingly voiced a desire to review the program, but also many agreed that a focus on recruitment and retention is too narrow. They suggested as an alternative a broader focus on the effectiveness of the instructional program, with a particular emphasis on attempting to understand why some students remain in a program until their goals are accomplished, while others "drop out." In addition, there is interest in better understanding the general impact of participation in ABE on the quality of life for adults who have been enrolled in ABE in the past.

Although we have tried to develop the attached evaluation design to include the concerns expressed by those involved in ABE programs across the state, the study will be useful only if it accurately reflects those concerns. Please review the enclosed proposal and let us hear from you. Do not confine your response to the questions accompanying the proposal. We have purposely double spaced and left wide margins; fell free to write all over it.

We want to modify the current design, incorporating your suggestions, prior to submitting it for Special Project funding. Since the deadline is July 31, please respond before July 15. If funded, we plan to do a pilot study in September, so contact us again if additional ideas occur that may modify the pilot study.

Please use the enclosed envelope to respond in writing. If your time is short, you may prefer to call us (919-737-3590). Thank you for your assistance.

Enc.

North Carolina State University is North Carolina's original land-grant institution and is a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina.

North Carolina Department of Community Colleges
Adult Basic Education Evaluation
Design Proposal

Purpose:Provide information that will help ABE directors improve their instructional programs.

Objective: Determine the extent to which ABE programs are improving the ability of NC adults to read, write, and compute so that they lead more productive lives as family members, friends, citizens, and workers.

Methodology:

A. Use of existing data from annual program data reports to describe participation in the existing program, including:

1. demographic characteristics of participants;
2. recruitment methods in use;
3. participants' progress in the program;
4. length of participation in programs;
5. how many participants move on to other educational/training programs.

These aggregated data will describe the overall student population, but fail to provide detailed information that allows insight into what happens within a program. They also do not provide follow-up information for those who no longer actively participate. Therefore, these data will be supplemented with a series of indepth case studies organized by geographic area and population density.

B. Case studies.

1. Distribution

Two case studies will be developed from each of three regions (Coastal, Piedmont and Mountains). One in each region will be drawn from an area containing at least one population center of greater than 5,000 persons, and one from an area with no such population center. Six case studies will be developed all together. Interviews with state level ABE program administrators will be conducted to assist our understanding of the broader context in which individual ABE programs operate in N.C.

2. Case study framework

Case studies will include data from observations of the local ABE programs and the surrounding community, as well as data gathered from interviews. Interviews will be conducted with the following:

A. We will attempt to develop a sample of students representative of the potential ABE student population (based on census data) in terms of sex, race, and age distributions. They also will meet the following criteria, for each case study:

1) At least 3 "stayers" or current participants who have made identifiable progress in the program and have been active for at least 18 consecutive months;

2) At least 3 "completers" or former program participants who have left the program after meeting their goals, according to program staff;

3) At least 3 "drop outs" or former program participants who left the program but are not identified as having met their goals.

B. Program personnel associated with ABE programs operating in the case study area and with the individual students included in the case study, such as:

1) ABE program directors

2) ABE teachers and program volunteers

C. Other persons associated with case study students, as feasible and appropriate, such as:

1) Family members

2) Employers

3) Friends

Administration of the project

Research teams will be formed which will include one team member who is familiar with the local ABE program and the geographic area, and one member who has received training in the appropriate research techniques. The local team member will be responsible for identifying and contacting potential participants. The second member will be responsible for conducting the interviews and observations, maintaining transcripts and fieldnotes at the central project office, analyzing the case study data and writing the case studies. Both research members will participate with the central research program staff in analyzing the data of the six case studies as a group.

Administration of the study and training for researchers will be the responsibility of the Adult and Community College Education Department at NCSU. Working with the department will be a research coordinator and a person responsible for clerical support. The local team members as well as those responsible for data collection will be considered employees of the project and will be paid for their efforts. Local program staff will not be responsible for gathering or analyzing data although they will be asked to agree to participate in interviews. Regional meetings will be held throughout the state of North Carolina to provide opportunities for the entire ABE community to participate in interpreting the data prior to submission of the final report.

This will be an intensive study of approximately one year's duration. It will include an initial pilot study, data collection and analysis and the preparation of a final report to the DCC. Insight developed from an analysis of the case studies will be used to assist interpreting the data from the annual data reports.

There is no standard definition of a "good" ABE program. This study will bring insight into what is valued by program participants, administrators and teachers. Comparison of these standards and criteria will assist us in generating recommendations for more effective ABE programs throughout N.C. These recommendations will cover areas such as participant recruitment, instructional methods and materials, instructional program organization, student retention and program record keeping. In addition, the case studies themselves may be made available, protecting the confidentiality of the information, for use in staff development, program development and teacher training activities.

Response Form

Please use the space below to give us your response to the proposed evaluation design. In addition to your comments concerning the design in general, you may want to comment about specific sections such as:

1. Purpose and objective
2. Use of existing data
3. Use and distribution of case studies
4. Characteristics of subjects for case studies
5. Composition and use of research teams

Thank you for your assistance.
Please mail this form to:
Arlene Fingeret
ABE Project
Dept. ACCE
310 Poe Hall
North Carolina State University
Raleigh, NC 27607

4. Interview and Observation Guide

ABE Program and host institution (context information)

Physical description of building
History
Student population
Neighborhood or surrounding environment
Teachers
Special characteristics
Transportation and other linkages to larger community

The ABE Program

Location in building (and extension location)
Student population
Neighborhood and surrounding environment
Teachers
How is program evaluated?
Transportation and childcare
History
Organization (including administrative linkages to larger institution)
Types of learning activities available (learning resources centers, classrooms, tutorial assistance, etc.)
In-service program and other staff development opportunities

Class Schedule

Record keeping
How are "drop outs" and "completers" identified?
How and by whom are decisions made about curriculum? about recruitment? about placement? hiring teachers? scheduling?
How are students recruited?

ABE Administrators, Instructors, and other instructional personnel

Style
Physical description
Educational background
Employment background
Perspective on instructional responsibilities
Perspective on adult basic education
How did they come to view things this way?
What is a typical day?
Range of responsibilities
Relationship to ABE students
Relationship to additional personnel in classroom or learning environment
What materials are used? teaching methods? who chooses?
How much time spent in duties relating to ABE? Other jobs?
Definition of "success" or "completion"

Classroom Observations

Location in building

Physical setting (furniture, lighting, etc.)
Length of class
Role of teacher
How does class begin?
What does the teacher do?
Methods used?
Materials?
What do participants do?
What are the topics or the content? who chooses?
Flow of interaction
What happens if participants are late?
How are records kept?
Where is the instructor?
How are personnel such as volunteers involved?
How many students in class?

Other Administrative Personnel

Relationship to ABE program
Perspective on purpose of program, what is "success" and what is "completion"
What is a "good" program to them?
Descriptions of actions related to program (allocation' of resources, meetings with director or instructional personnel, etc.)

ABE Participants and Former Participants

Demographic Information
Chronology from childhood relating to schooling and family
Employment chronology relating to learning
Adulthood family life, community involvement, voting, coping with demands for reading and writing skills
ABE program participation: prior program involvement, enrolling this time, typical ABE class experience, assessment of learning, goals, relationship to teachers, volunteers, other students
Assessment of impact of ABE participation
Reasons for leaving program
Further education program participation, plans, goals
Assessment of future learning needs, goals

ABE Students Home Observations

Physical description
Geographic location
Reading materials in home?
Interpersonal interaction
Presence of telephone, television
Car
Calendar
Photographs

5. ABE PARTICIPANTS AND FORMER PARTICIPANTS INTERVIEW GUIDE

Date: Researcher Name:

Name:
Telephone Number:

How did you come to meet this person? (referral source):

Sex: Age: Race:

ABE Program Affiliation:

I. PERSONAL BACKGROUND

A. GROWING UP

Where did you grow up?
Did you go to public school?
If not, why not?
If so, what was public school like?
Grade/Age when left public school?
How did you come to leave school?
What else was happening in your life at the time?
How did your parents/siblings/friends react/feel about your leavi school?
What did you do when you left school?
How did you feel about leaving school?

B. HOME LIFE AS CHILD

Were there books or magazines (reading materials) in your home wh you were a child?

Did your parents/friends/siblings ever talk about school? What d they say?

C. PARENTS/ADULTS IN HOME/GUARDIAN

Educational backgrounds
Employment backgrounds
Geographic backgrounds
Marital status
Were/Are your parents/adults able to read and write? How do you know?
If not, how did your family deal with written materials coming to the house (mail, forms to ~~be~~ filled out, school reports, etc.)
Did your parents/adults have any involvement with your schooling (did they visit the school, know your teachers, check your homework, etc.?)
When you left school, did your parents/adults know you had proble with reading and writing? If so, how did they know? If not, w not?

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D. SIBLINGS/CHILDREN IN HOME (COUSINS, ETC.)

How many brothers and sisters do you have?
Are they older or younger than you are?
How far did they go in school?
Do they have any trouble with reading and writing? How do you know?
Do you ever talk with them about your problems reading and writing?
Do they ever talk about their problems? What do you say to each other?
How many of your siblings returned to school as adults to learn to read and write? For additional education?
What are your brothers and sisters doing now? (Jobs, school, etc.)

II. EMPLOYMENT

When did you get your first job? How did you learn to do that job?
How long did you stay in that job?
What did you do after that?
Develop a chronology of employment/skills involved. How did you learn the skills?
Was reading and writing required for any of those jobs?
Was reading and writing involved in finding any of these jobs? (Did you have to fill out job applications?)
If you changed type of work, how did that happen?
Are you working now? What job? Skills needed? Opportunities for mobility?
Do you desire change? Of what type? Do your co-workers read and write?
How do you know? Do they know you have trouble reading?
How do you think learning to read and write may make some difference in the type of jobs you will desire/be eligible for? How do you come to believe that?
What are your long-range employment goals? How are goals related to literacy? Do you know anyone who is working in that job now?

III. ADULTHOOD

A. FAMILY LIFE

Are you married? Who are adults in household? What is relation to you?
Does your husband/wife/friend know how to read and write? How far did he/she go in school?
Where do you live? How did you come to live there (particularly if different from where you grew up)?
Does your husband/wife/friend know of your difficulties with reading and writing?
How do they know? Do you know how they feel about it?
Do you have any children? How many? Ages? How are they doing/did they do in school? How do you know? Do they have any trouble with reading and writing?
Do/did you have any relationship with your children's school teachers?
What kind?
Do/did you visit the school, meet with the teachers? How does/did

that go?
How do you deal with:

- mail coming to the house?
- bills to be paid?
- money/checks?
- business paper work?
- taxes?
- shopping?
- answering your children's questions when you don't know the answers?
- Are there books or magazines in the house? Newspapers?
- What are they?
- How old are they?
- Does anyone read them? Who?
- For what purpose? When?
- Where are they located?

B. COMMUNITY

Do you spend a lot of time with other people?
Who are they?
What do you do?
What do you talk about?
Do they know how to read and write? How do you know?
Do they know you have trouble reading and writing? How do they know?
What difference does it make?
Do they know you have returned to school? How do they know?
If some know, and some do not, what is the difference between the two groups of people?
Where do you spend time together?
Do you ever go to restaurants? Church meetings? Movies? Bowling? Other activities?
What reading and writing tasks are you confronted with there? How do you handle them? Do you have any special responsibilities?
Do you know other adults who are unable to read and write? How do you know?
What do you think about them?
What government agencies do you deal with?
How do you contact them?
What services do you receive?
Do you have service workers visit in your home?
How do you handle the paper work?
Do they know you have trouble reading?
Do you have dealings with other service agencies? (church, civic, etc.)

C. VOTING

Are you registered to vote? If so, when did you register? How di you come to register? Have you voted?
If not registered, is there a reason why not?
How do you find out about the candidates?
Do you think voting is important? How come?

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D. CHANGE

Do you think anything would be different about your life if you could read and write well? What things? How do yo come to feel that way?
How would reading and writing affect social situations?
Community participation?
Church participation?
Relationship with family members?
Employment?
Self concept?

E. COPING

Are there any things you do to make people think you can read and write well? What things? How did they develop? How long have you been doing them?
In what circumstances to you do them?
What do you do when you want to find out some particular piece of information?
If you ask somebody, who and under what circumstances? How do you choose?
Do you have a driver's license? When did you get it? Where did you get it?
What did you have to do to get it? (pass a written test? oral test? road test?
How did you learn how to drive? How to pass the test? Did somebody help you? Who? What help was provided?
Do you have any difficulty getting around to different places? Where do you often go? How do you get there? How did you learn how to get there?
Do you do anything special to help yourself remember things? What do you do? How did it develop?

IV. PROGRAM PARTICIPATION

A. PRIOR ABE

Have you tried to learn how to read between when you dropped out of school and when you came into this program? If so, what happened?
Have you been in an ABE or literacy program in the past? How did you come to be involved in that program?
At what point did you stop attending? What else was going on at the time?
Did you feel you learned new skills/ideas/anything else in that program?
When was this? Where was this?

B. ENROLLING

How did you come to enroll in this program? How did you first hear about ABE programs?
How did you come to decide to return now? What else was happening at that time?
What process did you go through to get into the program?

How did you hear about it?
Called who? when? who called?
Took tests?
How do you get to school?
Does your spouse/children/friends know you've returned to school? Do you know how they feel about it?
Are there specific things you want to be able to do?
What would make you feel you completed the program successfully?
How would you know? How would your teachers know?
How long a period of time was there between your initial inquiry and when you actually began attending classes? What did you do during that time?
How did you come to attend specific classes?
Has anyone asked you about your goals? What have they asked? How have you responded?
How did you construct that response?

Probe on why students want to learn how to read better:
  If for a better job, what job? What difference would learning t read make?
  Do you know someone who has that job? What attracts you about that job?
  Do you know what is required for that job?
  If no specific job in mind, how do you see a relationship betwee participation in ABE and getting a job? If they think they need GEDs for getting a job, what makes you think that?
  Do you think that what you learn in school will actually prepare you better for new jobs?
If they want to learn because of relationships with their children,
  What makes you feel that way? How do you describe current relationships?
  With their children? How would learning to read make a difference?

C. TYPICAL ABE CLASS

What is a typical ABE class experience like for you? What happens from the time you get to the building?
Is there anything you think should be different about ABE? What? How did you come to feel that way?
Describe your teacher(s) in ABE.
Describe the other participants in the program.
Describe the kind of interaction among people in the program.
What kinds of books/learning materials do you use during classes?
Does teacher assign books? Do you choose?

D. LEARNING/CHANGE

Do you think you have learned anything since you've been coming to the program? Describe. How do you know? How do you learn?
Do you work on your reading between classes? How?
Is there anyone you can ask for help learning? Who? How do you ask?
How does it work?
Do you see any differences in your life since participating in the ABE program?

- social situations
- family relationships
- church participation
- community participation
- self-concept
- independent learning projects
- employment

How did those changes come about? Do you see them as related to participation in ABE in any way? How?

How do the people in your life who are related to those areas of change respond to change? How do you know? Do they know you are in school?

V. IF LEFT THIS PROGRAM

How did you come to leave the program?

What else was happening in your life at the time?

Were there other people involved in the process of making the decision?

Who? How? When? In what ways?

How long ago did you leave the program?

Have you tried to learn how to read since leaving the program?

When you left, did you feel you had learned anything at that point? If so, do you still feel you have "held onto" any new learning?

Have you thought about re-entering an ABE program? What have you thought about it? What do yuou think would encourage you to re-enroll?

Has you life changed since leaving the program? In what ways? How have those changes come about?

6. Study Participant Cover Sheets

ABE Evaluation Project Data Sheet -- Students

Name of Informant____

Program____________________ Primary Interviewer_______________

First contact date____________

Age__________ Sex__________ Race___________

Current Employment:______________________________________

Married? Y N Children? N Y Ages __________

Age left school_____________Grade left school______ ____Never attended public school

Major reason given initially for leaving school____________________

____

____

Major reason given initially for returning ________________________

____

____

____

Does someone do the reading for this person? Who? ________________

Changes identified since being in ABE___________________________

____

____

____

Goals for ABE work_______________________________________

____

____

Phone or procedure for additional contact________________________

____

Instructor's name____

Additional comments:

ABE Evaluation Project Date Sheet -- Former Students

Name of Informant____

Program______________________________ Primary interviewer______________

First contact date_______________

AGe_____________ Sex____________ Race_____________

Current employment____

Married? Y N Children? N Y AGes____________

Age left school__________ GRade left school________ _____never attended public schools

Major reason given initially for leaving school________________________

____

Najor reason given initially for returning____________________________

____

Major reason given initially for leaving ABE__________________________

____

Enrollment in other educational or training programs following ABE (include GED):

____

____

Changes identified as a result of ABE_________________________________

____

____

Does this person consider him/herself a completer or a drop out?____________

Do you consider this person a completer or a drop out?__________

Why?

____

____

Phone or procedure for additional contact______________________________

____

Additional comments :

ABE Evaluation Project Data Sheet -- Instructors

Name of Informant

Program   Primary Interviewer

First contact date

Age   Sex   Race   No. of years ABE

Full time or part time?   Other current employment

Training, education or other preparation for teaching ABE prior to employment in ABE (include volunteering in ABE)

Training, education or other preparation for teaching ABE while employed in ABE (in-service education)

Prior experience teaching ABE

Why teach in ABE?

Definition of successful teaching

Definition of successful student

Problems in teaching ABE

Phone for additional contact:
Additional comments:

ABE Evaluation Project Data Sheet -- ABE Administrators

Name of informant____

Program______________________ Primary Interviewer____________

First contact date_______________ Length of involvement in ABE________

Age____________ SEx______________ Race____________

Full time or part time?__________ Other current employment or additional responsibilities in addition to ABE:______________________________

Training, education, experience or other preparation for ABE administration:

Specific personal/professional reasons for involvement in ABE____________

Criteria for a successful ABE program__________________________

Problems identified in ABE _________________________________

Achievements/Accomplishments in ABE___________________________

Phone for additional contact____________________________

Additional comments:

ABE Evaluation Project Date Sheet -- Volunteers, community members, others

Name of informant____

Primary interviewer____________________ Date of first contact____________

Relationship to ABE ____

Length of relationship (if volunteer, etc.) ____________________

Comments:
If appropriate, address training or other experience relevant to an instructional or administrative role; changes since involvement in ABE for self or related ABE student or former student; criteria for success; other categories of information on other date sheets.

Age____________ Sex__________ Race________ Program __________

Phone or procedure for additional contact________________________

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